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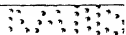
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*Our
American Language*

On
American Language

By

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Preface

IT IS the purpose of this book to show how we in the United States use, pronounce, and spell words, and why we prefer the words, phrases, names, and expressions which distinguish the American language from other forms of English.

Some of us enjoy a good argument about language, a discussion of the importance of slang, or the differences between American and British pronunciation. But many of us devote little or no serious thought to the characteristics of our speech. We feel that in a general way our speech habits conform to some generally accepted standard. In traveling about the country, however, we notice regional variations; and more especially when we hear English spoken by people from Great Britain or other English-speaking countries, we recognize differences from our manner of speaking. Yet we cannot say that American speech is a dialect of British English or that British English is a dialect of American speech. Is there actually such a thing as an American language, however? Used essentially the same way by the 140 million people of the United States, and developed with the shaping of our country through the years, what can we call our American speech if not a language?

We bring together here the characteristic words and phrases, spellings, and pronunciations that make up the American language. Much of this material has hitherto been available only in learned articles and dictionaries. In this book, widely scattered items have been brought together and so arranged as to show how the language has developed from colonial times to the present day.

The early chapters are devoted to examining the differences that exist between American and British speech. This brings

out the variations and also makes clear our preferences in such matters as accent, intonation, and spelling.

It is not surprising that the pronunciation of the average American differs from that of the average Englishman. Even in the days of the colonists, local needs and conditions made their impress on the language, and this has continued throughout the years. Meanwhile the language as used in England has also undergone modifications during the same years but in other directions. The most striking difference between the two is probably the vowel sound in words like *path* and *can't*. Americans use the "flat-a" as in *hat*; the British since the end of the eighteenth century have gradually shown a preference for the vowel-sound of the word *father*. It is pointless to claim that one is "better" than the other. They are simply different.

As with pronunciation, so with spelling. And when we turn to spelling, it is perhaps just as well to admit that English spelling, both in England and in America, is full of inconsistencies and absurdities. On both sides of the Atlantic there have been, from early times, attempts to reform our orthography. Persuasive persons have argued that almost any change would be an improvement, and certainly most persons will agree that any reasonable attempt to simplify our spelling deserves support. But despite this laudable sentiment, all wholesale reforms have been doomed in advance, and partial reforms have had only modest success, if any at all. Thus it is that most of us are resigned to the fact that words will continue to have unnecessary letters, and in general will continue to bear little resemblance to the sounds they are intended to represent. The weight of tradition and sentiment is too much for the reformers. Yet even with these common limitations, Englishmen and Americans display certain marked differences in their preferences in spelling, and we consider these differences in this book.

It is, of course, in individual words that the two languages differ most noticeably. Quite apart from the question of "Americanisms," it is a fact that an impressive list of British and American preferences in vocabulary can be drawn up. Such a list will be found in Chapter Four. Sometimes Americans attach to a word a meaning unknown or unacceptable in England.

Sometimes two different words are used to describe the same object or situation. Even if an occasional difference seems trivial, we ought to consider the cumulative effect of some hundreds of such differences. And they are all the more significant because they usually occur in ordinary everyday matters such as cooking and housekeeping, in business and professions. We take up all of these.

The language as a reflection of our country's history, past and present, is best studied in the words which Americans have come to regard as traditional, in the new words that have been pressed into service in our own day, and in both the place names of America and the personal names.

Certain activities suggest themselves as providing words that have helped give a characteristic tone to the American vocabulary. Farmers and ranchers, for example, have contributed a number of terms and expressions which we regard as traditional. Our modern business civilization owes something to the small shopkeepers of early times as well as to later mass-production methods. If America today is a nation on wheels, we ought not to forget that much of our interest in travel goes back to stagecoach and canalboat times. Our educational system, from the days of the "little red schoolhouse," owes many of its most distinctive traits to the serious thought which our forefathers devoted to instruction. And if we did not originate the language of the sea, we have made it our own; from the days of the clipper ships to these days of trans-oceanic flight, ours has been a nation for whom the sea has never lost its fascination. These terms from traditional activities make an absorbing chapter in our book.

Our complex modern civilization is revealed in the prominence given to certain words today. The chapter on words reflecting modern life gives evidence of both our love of work and our love of play. Taken in conjunction with the earlier—the traditional—terms, they demonstrate forcefully that ours is a vigorous and living language.

The author has searched widely for the material assembled in this book, and has consulted many authorities, including such basic works as the monumental *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, George Philip Krapp's *English*

Language in America, and H. L. Mencken's famous book, *The American Language*.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. James F. Bender, Director of the National Institute of Human Relations, and the *New York Times*, for permission to quote from Dr. Bender's comparison (*New York Times*, Oct. 22, 1944) of the speech characteristics of Governor Dewey and President Roosevelt as noted during the presidential campaign of 1944. Special thanks also go to George W. Hibbitt, of the Department of English at Columbia University, for information relating to American and British intonation.

R. D. M.

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What Is the American Language?

IS there an American Language?

Most Americans, if asked what language they speak, would answer "English," and few if any would say "American." Yet practically all Americans readily recognize the striking differences between the English spoken in Great Britain and the English used in the United States. Actually, not only is the pronunciation noticeably different but there are important differences in the way in which individual words and expressions are used. We even find that the same English word may to an Englishman mean something quite different from what it means to us. And there are also numerous differences in the spelling used in the two countries.

In structure and grammar, the English we speak is essentially the same as the English spoken throughout the world. But American English can be distinguished from the English spoken elsewhere by its directness and informality of expression, its tendency to coin or invent words and terms that to us more graphically and colorfully express the needs of the moment. This tendency began to manifest itself early in the manner in which the first English-speaking Americans met their speech needs in the New World. And throughout succeeding generations the many newcomers to America from all parts of the world have made their contributions directly or indirectly, and these have been absorbed into our American tongue and spread across the land.

In this book we shall discuss the many characteristically American ways of saying things, the words and phrases which have come right out of American life—from our farms, our ships, our factories, our sports, our politics, and our ideals. Thus we shall see our language as a vital, growing expression of America, well

adapted to the needs of our vigorous and democratic country, a language which we are continually molding to suit the circumstances of our changing life of today. There is indeed an American Language!

CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

When the English colonists settled in America in the first part of the seventeenth century the language they spoke was what we know now as Elizabethan English, the English that we read in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It was a colorful, free kind of English whose grammatical forms had not been regularized, whose spelling often depended on a writer's whim. It was this easy plasticity, grafted onto the conditions of a new land, that accounts in a large measure for the qualities of our American language today. The English of Great Britain has the same linguistic inheritance as our own, but the development there has been different in many details.

The early Americans may be said to have started out with a language in a flexible stage in its development, and consequently one hospitable to change. Almost from the very beginning of their stay here, the colonists' language began to change, and the changes continued, keeping pace with the needs for new expression as determined by changes in the conditions of life. At numerous points in the history of American English, persons have attempted to dam or stop or channel some aspect of its flow, but the groundswell of the everyday use of the language has virtually drowned out these restrictions.

Bearing in mind the fact that the American language is still evolving, we can, nevertheless, enumerate here some of its broad characteristics. All of these, as we shall see, will be covered in greater detail in one or another of the divisions of this book, but it is worth mentioning them at this point so that we may have a clear over-all picture of the language as a whole.

1. **READY BORROWING FROM OTHER LANGUAGES.** American English has always welcomed words from other languages which covered an area of meaning not taken care of by already existing

words. The earliest borrowing was, quite naturally, from the native Indians. The first recorded loan words which survive are *raccoon* (1608), *totem* (1609), and *opossum* (1610). Later sources of new words were Dutch, French, Spanish, German, and, to a lesser extent, Italian, Yiddish, Chinese. It should be noted that this process continues today, even though American English, in its turn, is able to supply some of its own words to the other languages.

2. USING OLD WORDS IN NEW MEANINGS. Examples of this process include:

	OLD MEANING	NEW MEANING
bee	an insect	a neighborly gathering for work or competition
corn	grain	Indian maize
place	a locality	a job
store	a storehouse	a shop

3. COMPOUNDING EXISTING ENGLISH WORDS. Compounding is the process of joining two words to form a new word or term. The language abounds in examples of this process, a few of which are *half-breed*, *fish story*, *bedrock*, *prickly heat*, *gunman*, *fade-out*, and *payroll*.

4. READY ACCEPTANCE OF NEOLOGISMS. When things, actions, or situations cannot be adequately denoted by any of the three methods just mentioned, Americans are quick to create new words or *neologisms*. It is believed that 3,000 new words are coined in America each year. Often these neologisms have a short or disreputable existence, particularly if they are merely synonyms of already existing words, but where they fill a real need they find their way into the main stream of the language. Some of these are *jeep*, *rambunctious*, *honky-tonk*, *debunk*, and *sundae*.

5. FONDNESS FOR CLIPPING WORDS. Clipping is the process of using only a part of a word to stand for the whole word. Some clipped words are *ad* for *advertisement*, *auto* for *automobile*, *gym* for *gymnasium*, *gas* for *gasoline*, *bunk* for *buncombe*, *phone* for

telephone, *sleeper* for *sleeping car*, *co-ed* for *co-educational*, *frat* for *fraternity*, and *taxi* or *cab* for *taxicab*.

6. FONDNESS FOR BLENDING WORDS. A blend is a merger of whole words or parts of words into new words. They are sometimes called "portmanteau words" or "telescope words." Some of these are *Amerind* for *American Indian*, *travelogue* for *travel monologue*, *cablegram* for *cable telegram*, *newscast* for *news broadcast*, *pulmotor* for *pulmonary motor*, and *dumfound* for *dumb* and *confound*.

7. USE OF WORDS AS VARIOUS PARTS OF SPEECH. The American tendency is to look upon many words as being free agents as far as their grammatical categories are concerned. *Tomahawk* was undoubtedly first known as a noun, but it seems to have been used early also as a verb, in the sense of *to tomahawk*. Other nouns so used include, *to table*, *to author*, *to contact* (still of doubtful acceptance), *to book*, *to chair* (in the sense of "to act as a chairman of a meeting"), *to box*, *to thumb*, and *to boot*. The process works in reverse also, and we have many nouns made up of verbs such as *stand-in*, *stand-off*, *shut-in*, *know-how*, *come-down*, *build-up*, *send-off*, *hair-do*, and *hideaway*. Verbs have also been formed from other parts of speech; these include: *to up*, *to ad lib*, *to yes*, *to alert*.

The characteristics of American English which we have just enumerated will be more fully revealed in the course of this book, where many examples of each of the traits mentioned will be found in lists of words grouped together and commented upon in later chapters.

THE FIELDS OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

Our discussion of the American language lends itself readily to division into a few large fields, each of them a fertile source of significant material and interesting information about the words we use.

In the first few chapters which follow this section, we shall concentrate on recognizing distinctions between American and British English, making clear the ways in which the spelling, pronun-

ciation, and the meanings of certain words differ at the present time on the two sides of the Atlantic. Then, in historical perspective, we consider the contributions of the New World, both in changing English words and in introducing new words, under the influence of languages other than English. A particularly fascinating field is the study of American place names, reflecting as they do the varied and colorful history of the country. Likewise, the study of personal names tells us much about the diversity of backgrounds which has produced a unified country. Then the first of a pair of chapters takes up the intriguing survival in our present-day speech of terms which were originally limited to the speech of one or another of the trades or professions or activities which were so characteristic of American life during the formative years. The companion chapter shows us how readily we absorb into our everyday language words brought into use for the special needs of one or another of the equally characteristic activities of our complex and constantly changing American life of today. The book closes with the ever fresh and up-to-the-minute question of American colloquialism and slang, which account for much of the vivacity and raciness of American English.

Every language consists of words, and the best way to discuss a language is to let the words speak for themselves, wherever possible. For this reason we shall not accord a great deal of space to generalizations, preferring to present a series of chapters, each of which is devoted to a group of American words having some interesting aspect in common, and to permit the reader to acquire for himself from these words an appreciation and understanding of our American Language.

II

American Spelling

THE BASIS OF SPELLING

ALPHABETS exist for the purpose of recording in written form the words of a language. In most Western languages alphabets are approximately phonetic; that is, every sound in the language can be represented in writing by a letter or combination of letters. However, the degree to which these languages are phonetic varies greatly. Italian, Spanish, and German are probably the most phonetic of our modern Western languages because sounds are almost always recorded by the same letters or groups of letters. English, however, has undergone so many changes and has strains of so many parent languages that its spelling is phonetic only to a comparatively limited extent. Likewise, the sounds in English words have changed, but many of the signs first used to represent them have remained fixed. As a result, spelling in English has become a rather difficult process. The fact that *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*, for example, represent not one sound each, but several, scarcely needs illustration. In the words *any* and *many*, *a* has the sound of short *e*, as in *bed*. In the word *cottage*, *a* is pronounced almost like the short *i* in *hit*. In the words *fern*, *virtue*, and *work*, *e*, *i*, and *o* have the sound of short *u* as in *hurt*.

The English alphabet, adapted from the Roman, has twenty-six letters. In the English alphabet, unlike the Roman, *u* and *v* are differentiated, as are *i* and *j*.

There are at least forty sounds of English speech, and they are all represented by these twenty-six signs. How is this done? Either each sign must stand for more than one sound or else new combinations must be invented to represent them. For example, the

letter *a* indicates a variety of sounds, as is shown by the following words:

profane	father	sofa
fare	calf	savage
random	talk	

In addition, certain combinations of letters, called *digraphs*, are also used to represent some of these sounds. For example, the sound of *a* as in *hate* is spelled also in these ways:

<i>ai</i> as in <i>mail</i>	<i>ea</i> as in <i>break</i>
<i>ay</i> as in <i>may</i>	<i>ei</i> as in <i>rein</i>

Some idea of the complexity which American spelling shares with British may be gathered from the following:

lord	
caught	
law	represent an <i>o</i> sound

fare	
fair	
there	
where	represent an <i>a</i> sound

people	
be	
deceive	
quay	
meet	
meat	represent an <i>e</i> sound

Some digraphs almost invariably indicate the same sound:

<i>aw</i> as in <i>lawn</i>	
<i>ee</i> as in <i>seen</i>	(Exceptions: <i>breeches</i> , <i>been</i>)
<i>ey</i> as in <i>they</i>	(Exception: <i>key</i>)

But most digraphs serve to indicate a variety of sounds:

stairs	height	group
aisle	heifer	dough
plait		ought
villain	thief	trouble
	lie	
play	friend	down
quay		flow
(pronounced <i>kē</i>)	loaf	
	broad	buy
least	toe	
death	canoe	persuade
early	does (verb)	guard
heart		
great	soon	blue
	good	pedagogue
rein	flood	
conceit	door	guide
their		guilt
sleigh	hour	fruit

SPELLING REFORM

From these few examples it should be clear that our present spelling does not always fulfill its legitimate function of denoting the pronunciations of words or even of indicating their derivation. It has been said that our spelling is consistent only in its inconsistency. Many suggestions for reforming spelling have been made, and the reformers include such persons as Noah Webster, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Roosevelt, and George Bernard Shaw. But few of their changes have been accepted. In general these men have tried to eliminate from words letters which tend to mislead in pronunciation and those which are not needed in pronunciation, and to make uniform the spelling of sounds which are pronounced in the same way.

One of the early attempts at spelling reform in America was made in 1789 by Noah Webster, the compiler of the first great American dictionary. As was to be expected, many of his suggestions met with violent opposition. Some of them persisted;

others were quietly removed from later editions of the dictionary. Webster suggested the following substitutions, among others:

WEBSTER'S SUGGESTIONS	OLDER SPELLINGS
public	publick
favor	favour
nabor	neighbour
hed	head
proov	prove
flem	phlegm
hiz	his
giv	give
det	debt
ruf	rough
wel	well
traveler	traveller
frolic	frolick
center	centre
défense	defence
aker	acre
plow	plough
soe	sew
thred	thread

Even though many of these reformed spellings were later abandoned, the great lexicographer had influence enough to establish the ending in *-or* for words like *color* and *humor*, and to encourage such spellings as *center* and *theater*, rather than *centre* and *theatre*. Moreover, he lent his support to the words *ax*, *jail*, *mold*, *plow*, and *wagon* as opposed to the earlier *axe*, *gaol*, *mould*, *plough*, and *waggon*.

There were attempts to reform English spelling long before Noah Webster; there have been attempts ever since. The Simplified Spelling Board, organized in New York City in 1906 and subsidized by Andrew Carnegie, put forward some noteworthy proposals but eventually concentrated on a short list of proposed new spellings:

ad	enuf	shal
addrest	fil(d)	shipt
anser(d)	fixt	tel
ar	giv	telephone
askt	hav	(al)tho
bil(d)	insted	thoro(ly)
buro	liv(d)	thru(out)
catalog	program	twelv
det	reciet	wil
engin	reciev(d)	yu

Of this list of words, only *catalog* and *program* have gained any noticeable support.

In England, the Society for Pure English, founded in 1913 by the poet Robert Bridges, sponsored a number of new spellings and even some new symbols for a group of sounds. Bridges used this system in his poem *The Testament of Beauty*, of which an illustrative passage follows:

'Tis true ther is no balance to weigh these goods and ill
 nor any measur of them, like as of colour and heat
 in their degrees; they are incommensurable in kind.
 'Tis with mere pleasur and pain as if they, being so light,
 coud not this way or thatt deflect Life's monarch-beam;
 for howso deliberately a man may wish for death
 still wil he instinctivly fight to the last for life.

In 1934, the Chicago *Tribune* adopted a few reformed spellings:

REFORMED SPELLING	ORIGINAL SPELLING
advertisment	advertisement
analog	analogue
canceled	cancelled
catalog	catalogue
controled	controlled
controler	controller
cotilion	cotillion
decalog	decatalogue
definitly	definitely

REFORMED SPELLING	ORIGINAL SPELLING
demagog	demagogue.
dialog	dialogue
drouth	drought
extoled	extolled
fantom	phantom
fulfilment	fulfillment
harken	hearken
hocky	hockey
indefinitly	indefinitely
monolog	monologue
patroled	patrolled
pedagog	pedagogue
prolog	prologue
skilful	skillful
tranquility	tranquillity

Every attempt to reform our spelling meets with opposition. Persons who have with great effort mastered the "rules" of English spelling always resent any new spellings. The forms *sulfur* for *sulphur* and *ameba* for *amoeba* seem as uncouth to many as do the forms *thru*, *burlesk*, *nite*, *foto*, and *thoro*. Those who condemn the new forms seem to do so because they have become sentimentally attached to the older ones. They like *through*, *burlesque*, *night*, *photo*, and *thorough*, not because these spellings efficiently represent the sounds of speech, but because these spellings are familiar. When in the days of Noah Webster it was suggested that the *k* be dropped from such words as *critick* and *publick* there were outcries of rage similar to those heard today when *buro* is recommended as an improvement over *bureau*. This hostility to change is a formidable obstacle to the progress of spelling reform.

DIFFERENCES IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH SPELLING

Even the most casual American reader notices differences between British and American spelling. He finds that in books

printed in England *vapor* is spelled *vapour* and *color* is spelled *colour*. Probably the *-our* words provide the variants best known to both British and American readers. American usage has been consistent in dropping the *u*, not only from the noun itself but also from its derivatives. We write *color*, *colorless*, *colorful*, *colorable*, *coloration*, *discolored*, *discoloration*, and so on. Investigation shows that British usage is still in a transition stage, recommending *coloration*, *colorific*, *colorimeter*, but retaining *colour*, *bicolour*, *discoloured*, *overcolour*, *tricolour*, and *uncoloured*. *Vapour* is the accepted British spelling, but we find that the derivatives include not only the forms with *u*, such as *vapourer*, *vapourish*, *vapoury*, but also those without *u*, like *vaporize*, *vaporability*, *vaporization*, *vaporizer*, *vaporous*, *evaporate*, and many others.

The American reader, if he is observant, will discover other differences. If he himself writes *encyclopedia*, *center*, *mold*, *connection*, and *traveler* (as he should), he may notice that British usage prefers *encyclopaedia*, *centre*, *mould*, *connexion*, and *traveller*.

The following pages of this chapter are intended to draw attention to certain spelling problems that arise from these differences and to provide convenient check-lists for ready reference. The lists have been grouped under certain headings; for example, the *-our* words are collected and presented in a single list. Whenever two forms are given, the first is preferred.

WORDS ENDING IN *-or* (BRITISH *-our*)

arbor	favor	rigor
ardor	fervor	rumor
armor	flavor	savior
armory	harbor	savor
behavior	honor	splendor
clamor	humor	succor
clangor	labor	taboret
color	neighbor	tenor
demeanor	odor	tumor
dolor	parlor	valor
enamor	pavior	vapor
endeavor	rancor	vigor

By including the derivatives, this list could be greatly extended, but we have already observed that in American usage the *u* has been consistently dropped in such words as *disfavor*, *dishonor*, *high-flavored*, *many-colored*, *misbehavior*, *misdemeanor*, *unneighborly*, *unsavoriness*, and *well-favored*. There is some reluctance on the part of many persons to abandon the spelling *Saviour* in religious usage although the form *savior* is generally used otherwise. And possibly because it has been in use for a comparatively short time, the word *glamour* often keeps the *u* despite the fact that *glamorous* has lost it.

WORDS ENDING IN *-er* (BRITISH *-re*)

accouter	meager	salt peter
amphitheater	meter	scepter
caliber	miter	sepulcher
center	niter	somber
fiber	ocher	specter
luster	reconnoiter	theater, theatre
maneuver	saber	

Although the form *theater* is given as preferred in Webster's *New International Dictionary*, it is worth noting that the majority of New York *theatres* use the other spelling.

It should be observed that the ending *-re* has been retained in words with *c* or *g* preceding the ending so that these letters will not be softened in sound:

acre	lucre	nacre
chancre	massacre	ogre

WORDS ENDING IN *-ize* AND *-ise*

Although many English printers follow the practice of changing the ending *-ize* to *-ise*, in all except the relatively short list given below, American usage has consistently favored the ending in *-ize*. It is interesting to note that the London *Times* and the presses of Oxford and Cambridge join the American printers in using *-ize*. *Organize*, *civilize*, and *baptize* are illustrative words.

New words like *pasteurize* and *rubberize* regularly use this ending.

The words in the following list, however, must be spelled with the ending *-ise*:

advertise	disenfranchise	merchandise
advise	disfranchise	misadvise
affranchise	disguise	mortise
apprise (<i>to inform</i>)	emprise	premise
arise	enfranchise	prise (<i>to force</i>)
chastise	enterprise	reprise
circumcise	excise	revise
comprise	exercise	rise
compromise	exorcise	supervise
demise	franchise	surmise
despise	improvisе	surprise
devise	incise	

TREATMENT OF FINAL *l*

American usage differs from British in the treatment of final *l*. American writers follow the regular rule for derivatives formed by adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, when the word ends with a vowel preceded by a single consonant. Final *l* is not doubled unless the word is a monosyllable or is accented on the final syllable. Thus we write *propel*, *propelled*, *propeller*, but *travel*, *traveled*, *traveler* because the accent is not on the last syllable. British usage recommends doubling the *l* in the following words (and others formed by the addition of a suffix beginning with a vowel):

appareled	cudgeled	handseled
beveled	dialed	impaneled
canceled	dueled	imperiled
(<i>but cancellation</i>)	emboweled	jeweled
caroled	equaled	kenneled
channeled	fueled	labeled
chiseled	graveled	laureled
counseled	groveled	leveled

libeled	quarreled	tasseled
marshaled	raveled	timbreled
marveled	remodeled	tinseled
medaled	rivaled	totaled
metaled	roweled	toweled
modeled	shoveled	trammed
paneled	shriveled	traveled
parceled	signaled	troweled
penciled	sniveled	tunneled
periled	stenciled	victualled
petaled	swiveled	weeveled
pommeled		

In words ending with a double *l*, the two *l*'s are retained when derivatives are formed:

skill, skillful, skillfully, skillfulness, skilled

British writers prefer the form *skilful*.

When one or more syllables are prefixed to a word ending in double *l*, American writers retain both *l*'s:

enthrall, enthralling
distill, distilled

fulfill, fulfillment
enroll, enrollment

AMERICAN PREFERENCE FOR *e* (BRITISH *oe* OR *ae*)

In most words which the British spell with *oe* or *ae*, American usage seems to prefer *e*.

anemia	dieretic	fecal
anesthetic	edema	feces
archeology	encyclopedia	fetal
asafetida	eon	fetus
cyclopedia	esophagus	orthopedia
diarrhea	esthetic	paleography
dieresis	estrus	

Note that the form *egis* has not yet replaced the form *aegis*. Also, *subpoena* is still the preferred American form, rather than *subpena*.

AMERICAN PREFERENCE FOR *in-* (BRITISH *en-*)

The prefixes *in-* and *en-* both mean *in* or *within*. American preference is for *in-* in these words:

incase	indue
inclose (of land)	infold
incrust	inquire, inquirer, inquiry
indorse, endorse	insheathe

VERBS ENDING IN *-ed* OR *-t*

Many English verbs have already acquired a special form for the past tense and the past participle:

build	built	(<i>builded</i> is archaic)
creep	crept	(not <i>creeped</i>)
deal	dealt	
feel	felt	
keep	kept	
leave	left	
mean	meant	
sleep	slept	
sweep	swept	
weep	wept	

These forms are in keeping with the pronunciation. A number of other verbs now have two forms, for example, *dreamed* and *dreamt*, and there is no unanimity of opinion as to which form is preferred. *Leaped* and *leapt* are pronounced very much alike, however the word may be *spelled* (or "spelt"). But in some words the spelling does affect the pronunciation. In the following list the first form seems to be preferred by American writers:

bereaved	bereft	(<i>bereaved</i> is used in more emotional context)
burned	burnt	
learned	learnt	
knelt	kneeled	
leaned	leant	
learned	learnt	
smelled	smelt	
spilled	spilt	
spoiled	spoilt	

AMERICAN SPELLING PREFERENCES IN MISCELLANEOUS WORDS

The following list gives the American spelling preference as compared with the British:

abridgment	Preferred to British <i>abridgement</i> .
adz	Preferred to <i>adze</i> .
aid (n.)	The British prefer <i>aide</i> , short for <i>aide-de-camp</i> .
airplane	Has superseded the earlier <i>aeroplane</i> .
aluminum	British: <i>aluminium</i> .
analog	A reformed spelling of <i>analogue</i> .
asphalt	Preferred to <i>asphalte</i> .
ax	Preferred to <i>axe</i> .
baritone	Preferred to <i>barytone</i> , although at least one American newspaper, the New York <i>Herald Tribune</i> , uses <i>barytone</i> .
bark (vessel)	<i>Barque</i> is encountered frequently in British usage.
bazaar	Preferred to <i>bazar</i> although the latter is recommended by the U.S. Government Printing Office.
behoove	Preferred to <i>behove</i> .
boulder	<i>Boulder</i> is a variant spelling.
brier	Preferred to <i>briar</i> .
briquet	A shortened form of <i>briquette</i> .
broadax	Preferred to <i>broadaxe</i> .
bur	<i>Burr</i> is the older spelling.
caliper	British: <i>calliper</i> .
calk (to stop seams)	British: <i>caulk</i> .

cantaloupe	The British prefer the shorter form <i>cantaloup</i> .
catalog	A reformed spelling of <i>catalogue</i> .
catsup	British: <i>ketchup</i> .
check (bank draft)	British: <i>cheque</i> .
cipher	The British sometimes use the older form <i>cypher</i> .
clew (n.)	For nautical meanings; <i>clue</i> for all others.
connection	British: <i>connexion</i> .
cozy	British: <i>cosy</i> or <i>cosey</i> .
cue	British <i>queue</i> .
curb (n.)	British <i>kerb</i> .
czar	Preferred to <i>tsar</i> .
decalog	A reformed spelling of <i>decatalogue</i> .
defense	British: <i>defence</i> .
deflection	British: <i>deflexion</i> .
develop	Preferred to <i>develope</i> .
device	The noun; <i>devise</i> is the verb.
disk	In botany and zoology <i>disc</i> is preferred.
doggerel	Preferred to <i>doggrel</i> .
draft	Generally used in the United States for <i>draught</i> .
drought	Preferred to <i>drouth</i> .
dryly	Preferred to <i>drily</i> .
engulf	Preferred to <i>engulph</i> .
envelope	The preferred noun form.
fagot	British: <i>faggot</i> .
font	A printing term. British: <i>fount</i> .
frenzy	Preferred to the older <i>phrenzy</i> .
fuse	Preferred to <i>fuze</i> .

gage (n.)	A pledge; <i>gauge</i> , a standard measure.
gaiety	Preferred to <i>gayety</i> .
gaily	Preferred to <i>gayly</i> .
gamy	Having flavor of game; high-spirited. Preferred to <i>gamey</i> .
gantlet	A military punishment. British: <i>gantlope</i> . <i>Gauntlet</i> : a glove.
glycerin	British: <i>glycerine</i> .
gram	British: <i>gramme</i> .
gray	British: <i>grey</i> .
gruesome	Preferred to earlier <i>grewsome</i> .
gypsy	British: <i>gipsy</i> .
hiccup	Preferred to the earlier <i>hiccough</i> .
hostler	British: <i>ostler</i> .
hyena	Preferred to <i>hyæna</i> .
idyl	British: <i>idyll</i> .
inflection	British: <i>inflexion</i> .
intern	Preferred to <i>interne</i> .
jail	British: <i>gaol</i> .
jewelry	British: <i>jewellery</i> .
jimmy	Crowbar used by burglars. British: <i>jemmy</i> .
judgment	British: <i>judgement</i> .
kilogram	British: <i>kilogramme</i> .
knick-knack	Preferred to <i>nick-nack</i> .
kowtow	British: <i>kotow</i> .
lackey	Preferred to <i>lacquey</i> .
lacquer	Preferred to <i>lacker</i> .
licorice	British: <i>liquorice</i> .
likable	Preferred to <i>likeable</i> .
loadstone	Preferred to <i>lodestone</i> .
lodestar	Preferred to <i>loadstar</i> .

lodgment	British: <i>lodgement</i> .
mask	Preferred to <i>masque</i> except in reference to <i>masquerade</i> .
mold	British: <i>mould</i> .
mollusk	British: <i>mollusc</i> .
molt	British: <i>moult</i> .
monolog	A reformed spelling of <i>monologue</i> .
mustache	British: <i>moustache</i> .
naught	A cipher; preferred to <i>nought</i> .
net	Of amounts; not subject to deduction. British sometimes prefer <i>nett</i> .
offense	British: <i>offence</i> .
pajamas	British: <i>pyjamas</i> .
paraffin	Preferred to <i>paraffine</i> .
peas	Preferred to <i>pease</i> as plural.
pickax	Preferred to <i>pickaxe</i> .
pygmy	British: <i>pygmy</i> .
plaster	Preferred to the older <i>plaister</i> .
plow	British: <i>plough</i> .
poleax	British: <i>poleaxe</i> .
practice (v.)	British: <i>practise</i> .
premise (n.)	Preferred to <i>premiss</i> .
pretense	British: <i>pretence</i> .
program	Preferred to <i>programme</i> .
putter (v.)	To occupy oneself in a desultory way. British: <i>potter</i> .
reflection	British <i>reflexion</i> (in scientific uses).
Renaissance	Preferred to <i>Renascence</i> .
rime	Preferred to <i>rhyme</i> .
rodomontade	Preferred to <i>rhodomontade</i> .

sanitarium	The British prefer <i>sanitorium</i> .
scimitar	Preferred to <i>scimeter</i> .
selvage	Preferred to <i>selvedge</i> .
sergeant	Preferred to <i>serjeant</i> .
sextet	Preferred to <i>sextette</i> or <i>sextett</i> .
shyly	Preferred to <i>shily</i> .
siren	Preferred to <i>syren</i> .
slyly	Preferred to <i>slily</i> .
smolder	British: <i>smoulder</i> .
somersault	Preferred to <i>summersault</i> .
stanch	Preferred to <i>staunch</i> .
story	British prefer <i>storey</i> in referring to levels in a building.
sulfur	A reformed spelling of <i>sulphur</i> ; much used by chemists.
swap	Preferred to <i>swop</i> .
taboo	Preferred to <i>tabu</i> .
technic (n.)	Preferred to <i>technique</i> , especially in the plural.
tire	British: <i>tyre</i> .
vial	British: <i>phial</i> .
wobble	Preferred to <i>wabble</i> .
wagon	British: <i>waggon</i> .
whisky	Preferred to <i>whiskey</i> .
woolen	British prefer <i>woollen</i> .

III

American Pronunciation

THE BASIS OF PRONUNCIATION

Most of us who are at all conscious of our speech take pains to pronounce words correctly, but we seldom trouble our minds about what we mean by the word "correct" as applied to pronunciation. Actually correctness of pronunciation is a flexible term, and very often a "correct" pronunciation in one community will differ from a "correct" pronunciation in another. To illustrate this, pronounce the word *Chicago*. Do you pronounce it as though it were spelled "Shicahgo" or "Shicawgo"? Both are "correct," but the first is an Eastern American pronunciation, the second, a General American pronunciation. The way in which you pronounce it will depend on the area in which your speech patterns were determined. While there is no single standard of correctness of pronunciation in the United States, individual speech communities have their own standards and these are set in a broad way by the usage of those persons who are recognized as conserving and representing the best traditions of speech. Notice that although the *a* sound in *Chicago* may vary, nowhere in the United States is the pronunciation "Tchicago" (with the *tch* as in *batch*) sanctioned, because in no part of the country do the best users of English pronounce it that way.

The compilers of our great dictionaries freely admit that, at present, no uniformity of pronunciation is to be found throughout the English-speaking world. "Correct" pronunciation depends not only upon the locality in which the speaker lives but also upon the occasion. Correct speech is not too formal; it is not so informal as to be careless or slovenly. It is *colloquial* in the best sense of that word; it is the easy, familiar speech of cultivated persons.

There are two large areas of the subject of pronunciation that can be discussed with profit. The first of them is the variation that is to be found in the speech of Americans from different regions of this country. Second, we can compare American speech habits as a whole with British practice, keeping in mind, at the same time, that British speech likewise is not uniform with all speakers in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

AMERICAN REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN SPEECH

That the American language is generally uniform few will deny, but it is equally true that few persons will deny that there are regional differences. The question has arisen sharply in recent times in connection with radio broadcasting. One often hears it said that nation-wide hook-ups have brought about an amazing uniformity of vocabulary and pronunciation in this country. There can be no doubt that this statement is essentially correct, especially as regards vocabulary. New words and phrases are introduced simultaneously over a vast area. But if broadcasts have tended to produce any uniformity of pronunciation, they have perhaps done so to some extent by revealing to widely scattered listeners distinctive traits of certain regional groups.

American speech is ordinarily divided into three main speech areas: Eastern, Southern, and General American. Of course, there are variations within each of these areas, but this broad grouping affords a convenient way of talking about American speech habits. In recent years, a great deal of important work has been done with a view to mapping in detail the main divisions of American English speech. When the *Linguistic Atlas of the U.S. and Canada* now in preparation is completed, it will be possible to verify the preliminary generalizations that have been made about regional speech. If we may judge by that section of the *Atlas* that has already been made available, it seems clear that the traditional division of American speech into Eastern, Southern, and General American will be established more firmly than ever.

It has been estimated that some eleven million persons illustrate in their speech the principal characteristics of the Eastern form and twenty-six million the Southern form. Some ninety

million speakers use General American. It is this General American that most radio listeners expect the announcers and commentators to use. The great broadcasting chains have recognized this fact, and whenever country-wide broadcasts are given, announcers who best illustrate this form of American speech are chosen. Thus we may say that General American comes nearest of the three to being the standard.

EASTERN SPEECH

The Eastern form is spoken in an area including New York City and New England east of the Connecticut River. We cannot reproduce this or any other regional form of American English with any real accuracy, of course, even with the aid of phonetic symbols. It is best studied by means of phonograph recordings. But it is possible to suggest a few of the more striking characteristics, especially those most readily noted by the average listener.

A few of these characteristics may be singled out for special emphasis. First, there is the treatment of *r*. Final *r* is usually dropped unless a vowel follows. Speakers of the Eastern form say something like *brothah*, *mothah*, *sistah*, *ahbah*, *cah*, and *scah* for *brother*, *mother*, *sister*, *arbor*, *car*, and *scar*. If the following word begins with a vowel, the *r* is retained, as in the phrases *soar into the blue* and *my brother is at home*. As a result of this habit, an intrusive *r*-sound has developed in Eastern speech, as it has in British speech, before a vowel. The phrase *the idea is* often sounds like *the idear is*.

Then there is the characteristic Eastern treatment of the vowel sound in words like *car*, *park*, *farm*, *yard*, *sparse*, and *start*. This sound is neither the *a* of *father* nor the *a* of *hat* but somewhere between the two. It approaches the vowel sound of *am*.

Finally, there is the characteristic Eastern vowel sound of the words *bird* and *further*. When the vowel is accented, there is a slight *r*-sound in the speech of those who do not usually sound their *r*'s. Illustrative words include *err*, *fur*, and *fir*.

SOUTHERN SPEECH

Southern speech has much in common with Eastern speech. The region generally referred to as Southern includes Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and parts of Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Oklahoma. Naturally there are minor differences in various parts of this region. Southern speech exhibits a wide variety of intonation patterns, and most Southerners seem to Northerners to speak with a drawl. When Southern speech is imitated by means of spelling, the word *child* is usually represented as *chile*, for the Southerner has a habit of dropping final consonants. He tends also to turn single vowels into diphthongs. In many parts of the South, *thing* is pronounced *theng*, and on the other hand the words *penny*, *men*, *length*, and *stem* sound like *pinny*, *min*, *lingth*, and *stim*. The long *i* sound as in *high* and *I* is often spoken as a sound approaching *ah*.

Among non-Southerners the expression *you-all* or *y'all* is generally considered a hall mark of Southern speech. Careful observation of its use reveals that it does not replace *you* on all occasions, but refers to *you* in the plural number. It may be considered as an attempt to clarify the number of *you*, and so may be compared to the word *youse* as heard in other parts of the country.

Under the heading of Southern speech we should mention briefly the matter of Negro dialect. It should be recognized that the Negro has no greater innate tendency to speak one dialect or another than anyone else has. Proof of this is that the Negro who has been born and bred in the North and whose main contacts have been with Northerners speaks the dialect of other Northerners. The Southern Negro speaks the dialect of the Southern white. For a long time it was believed that the pattern of Southern speech could be attributed to the influence of the Negroid languages of Africa, transmitted to Southern children by Negro nursemaids and house servants. But now the tendency is to believe just the reverse—that is, that the Negro learned his way of speaking from the white Southerner. As for certain locutions

generally ascribed to Southern Negroes, such as *I is* for *I am*, most of them have been found to exist in earlier English forms which the Negro has retained after the white man discarded them. This concept of a special Negro dialect is perpetuated by the conventional representation in print of Negro speech. Among these are *ax* for *ask*, *bofe* for *both*, *chillun* for *children*, *sho* for *sure*, *yo* for *your*, but most of these are found as well among white persons in various parts of the South.

GENERAL AMERICAN SPEECH

All American speech which is neither Eastern nor Southern is General American. Speakers of General American cover a very wide area, including the Middle West, certain Eastern states like Pennsylvania and New Jersey, parts of New York State and Maryland, and the states of the Far West. Because General American is so widely spoken, it is this regional variation that we shall be referring to in the remaining pages of this chapter, unless one of the other variations is specifically mentioned. Two striking characteristics of General American are an active *r*-sound in such words as *bird*, *corner*, *harm*, and *farm*, and a tendency to give the sound of *a* as in *all* to such words as *Chicago*, *Washington*, *was*, *on*, *what*, and *want*.

The differences between General American and Eastern speech, which together are spoken by over a hundred million Americans, are clearly revealed by comparing the speech habits of the two chief candidates in the Presidential campaign of 1944, Franklin D. Roosevelt, born in New York State and educated at Harvard University, and Thomas E. Dewey, who was raised in the Middle West. The differences in their pronunciations corresponded to the recognized regional differences as shown in their handling of the following words:

	EASTERN	GENERAL AMERICAN
again	uh GĀN*	uh GĒN
against	uh GANST	uh GĒNST

*See Key to Pronunciation on page 42 for meaning of diacritical marks. The capitalized syllables are accented.

	EASTERN	GENERAL AMERICAN
Asia	Ā shuh	Ā zhuh
government	GUHV uhn m'nt	GUHV ern m'nt
greasy	GREES ĭ	GREEZ ĭ
Harvard	HAH v'd	HAHR verd
Japanese	Jăp uh NEES	Jăp uh NEEZ
marry	MĀR ĭ	MAIR ĭ
measure	MĚ zhuh	MĚ zher
neighbor	NĀ buh	NĀ ber
neither	NĪTH uh	NEETH er
on	ahn	awn
part	paht	pahrt
peculiar	pĭ KYŌOL yuh	pĭ KYŌOL i er
picayune	PIK ĭ ōōn	PIK uh yōōn
pork barrel	pawk BĀR ʔ	pawrk BĒR ʔ
soon	sōōn	sōōn
suggestion	suh JĚS ch'n	suhg JĚS ch'n
veterans	VĚT rĭnz	VET uh r'nz
Washington	WAH shĭng t'n	WAW shĭng t'n
white	wīt	hwīt
years	YĪ uhz	yeerz
yes	yĕs	yăs

AMERICAN AND BRITISH SPEECH COMPARED

American speech, including all its regional variations, can easily be distinguished from British speech. Words are accented differently, vowel and sometimes consonant sounds are given different qualities, and the rhythm or pattern of speech is different. How these differences arose is not definitely known, but it has been pointed out that most of the distinguishing qualities of American speech were at one time true also of some British speech and may even be found to some extent in certain of the British dialects today. Even the characteristic nasality of the speech of New England is said to have existed in some British speech at one time.

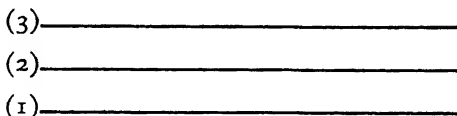
It should be kept in mind that there are many varieties of British speech. The kind of British speech that most Americans are likely to hear is that employed by persons in Southern England who have attended the famous "public schools" (which are really private schools in American terminology) and later the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It is normally called Received Standard or Public School pronunciation, and is a comparatively modern system. An older British pronunciation, heard today in the Midlands and the North, is much closer to our General American. Other variations heard in the British Isles are the accent of the Cockney, the Welshman, the Scotsman, the Yorkshireman, the Northern Irishman, and the native of the Irish Free State. Variations occur, likewise, in the speech of other nations of the British Commonwealth. Australians have characteristic speech habits of their own, while the Canadians speak in a manner that resembles American more than it does any of the other British variations.

INTONATION

What is called the "American accent" or the "British accent" is not so much a matter of unusual handling of individual sounds but also a difference of *intonation*. In phonetics and music, the term *pitch* is used to characterize that property of a tone which is determined by the striking of sound waves upon the ear—the larger the number of vibrations per second, the higher the pitch; the fewer the number of vibrations per second, the lower the pitch. The rise and fall in pitch observable in speech is what we call intonation. The fact that the word *intonation* is used also in relation to chanting or singing helps us to understand such terms as *speech melody* and *speech tunes*. The difference between singing and speaking lies in the fact that in singing we remain for a time on each note and then shift to the next pitch without any perceptible glide; in speaking, on the other hand, we almost constantly glide from one pitch to another, so that we rarely maintain any single level of tone.

To illustrate the differences between American and British intonation patterns, it is helpful to construct a staff similar to that

used in musical notation. In the speech pattern we shall use three lines; thus:



On this staff the line marked No. 1 is the lowest note or pitch of speech which will be intelligible and audible. Line No. 2 is the average pitch of utterance by any individual. Line No. 3 is the highest pitch of speaking which is ordinarily used by any speaker. On this staff we may represent the possible variations in pitch of each speaker. This is a framework by which to visualize the various "highs" and "lows" of the speaking voice in a phrase or sentence.

For example, suppose we have the sentence "I don't know." There are various ways that this might be said, depending on the context in which such a statement might be used. Usually if a word is stressed, the pitch is raised. The sign / after a word indicates that there is a slight rise at the end of the pronunciation of the word; the sign \ indicates a slight fall.

EMPHATIC	IRRITATED	RESIGNED
I don't know.	know!\	I don't know.

Let us now take some typical patterns of American and British intonation for the same question, phrase, statement, or sentence.

AMERICAN INTONATION	BRITISH INTONATION
train shall we What take? /	What train shall we take? /

AMERICAN INTONATION

BRITISH INTONATION

four
fif-
We'll take the
teen.

teen.
We'll take the four fif-

ful?
n't the weather aw-
Is-

Isn't
the weath-
er ful?
aw-

ly.
for Ju-
Not

Not
for
Ju-
ly.

go?
Shall we

Shall
we
go?

Yes. (Affirmation and
agreement)
No. (Determination)

Yes. (Affirmation and
agreement)
No. (Determination)

AMERICAN INTONATION	BRITISH INTONATION
<hr/> <div>o-</div> <div>looked all ver the</div> <hr/> <div>I</div> <div>house /</div> <hr/>	<hr/> <div>looked all</div> <hr/> <div>o-</div> <hr/> <div>I</div> <div>ver the</div> <div>house /</div> <hr/>
<hr/> <div>found my glasses</div> <hr/> <div>and</div> <hr/>	<hr/> <div>found my</div> <div>glass-</div> <hr/> <div>and</div> <div>es</div> <hr/>
<hr/> <div>bu-</div> <div>on the</div> <hr/> <div>reau.</div> <hr/>	<hr/> <div>on the bu-</div> <div>reau. \</div> <hr/>

ACCENTING OF SYLLABLES

Differences in accent—that emphasis given to a syllable or a word which makes it stand out—are another source of difference between American and English speech. In both English and American speech the accent tends to be recessive; that is, it tends to move towards the first syllable. Many words now accented on the first syllable in both England and America were in former times accented on a later one:

PRESENT ACCENT	FORMER ACCENT
DEMonstrate	deMONstrate
BALcony	balCONy
COMpensate	comPENsate

This movement towards the beginning of the word is a normal tendency in English and is especially noticeable in some pronunciations such as:

REsearch	DEfect
ADdress	MUStache
ROmance	

These are all popular pronunciations which, if judged by dictionary standards, would be incorrect. But so tenacious and widespread is this tendency that dictionaries are beginning to recognize the above pronunciations. In general this characteristic is more striking in American speech than it is in British. Here we incline to say *ADult* for *aDULT* and *ALly* for *alLY*.

Along with this movement, however, has gone a definite tendency (which began in America) to use accent to distinguish one part of speech from another when both have the same spelling. Adjectives are thus differentiated from verbs, as in the word *per^tect*, and nouns from verbs, as in *contrast*.

ADJECTIVE	VERB
ABsent	abSENT
FREquent	freQUENT
PERfect	perFECT
PREsent	preSENT
SUBject (<i>adj.</i> or <i>n.</i>)	subJECT

But differentiation of this sort occurs most frequently between nouns and verbs:

NOUN	VERB
ABstract	abSTRACT
ACcent	acCENT
AFfix	afFIX
ANnex	anNEX
ATtribute	atTRIBute
AUGment	augMENT
COMmune	comMUNE
COMpound	comPOUND
COMpress	comPRESS

NOUN	VERB
CONcert	conCERT
CONduct	conDUCT
CONflict	conFLICT
CONsort	conSORT
CONtest	conTEST
CONtract	conTRACT
CONverse (talk)	conVERSE
CONvert	conVERT
CONvict	conVICT
CONvoy	conVOY
COUNterbalance	counterBALance
DEcrease	deCREASE
DEScant	desCANT
DESert	deSSERT
DICtate	dicTATE
DIgest	diGEST
DIScord	disCORD
DIScount	disCOUNT
DIScourse	disCOURSE
ESsay	esSAY
EXploit	exPLOIT
EXtract	exTRACT
FERment	ferMENT
FOREtaste	foreTASTE
FOREtoken	foreTOKEN
IMport	imPORT
IMprint	imPRINT
INcline	inCLINE
INcrease	inCREASE
INlay	inLAY
INsult	inSULT
INterchange	interCHANGE
INterdict	interDICT
OBject	obJECT

NOUN	VERB
OFFset	offSET
Overflow	overFLOW
PERfume	perFUME
PERvert	perVERT
PREMise	preMISE
PREsent	preSENT
PRODuce	proDUCE
PROject	proJECT
RECord	reCORD
REFuse	reFUSE
SURvey	surVEY
TORment	torMENT
UPlift	upLIFT

Nouns and verbs are further differentiated by changes in consonant quality, most frequently by changing an unvoiced consonant in the noun (*s, th, f*) to a voiced consonant in the verb (*z, th, v*). This is true of both American and British pronunciation as in the following words:

NOUN	VERB
advice	advise
bath	bathe
belief	believe
breath	breathe
calf	calve
cloth	clothe
device	devise
glass	glaze
grass	graze
grief	grieve
half	halve
life	live
loss	lose
proof	prove

NOUN	VERB
relief	relieve
safe	save
sheath	sheathe
shelf	shelve
strife	strive
thief	thieve
wife	wive
wreath	wreathe

SECONDARY ACCENT

Quite striking to the average person, in comparing American and British speech, is the American tendency to retain a secondary accent in a number of words to which British speakers give only a primary accent. *Secretary* has two accents in American speech and is pronounced "SEKretri." The usual pronunciation in Southern England is "SEKretri." The American habit of retaining both accents is unquestionably a great aid to distinctness in speech and, conversely, the loss of the secondary accent in British speech has led to considerable obscuration of the syllables involved. The word *literary*, for example, is clearly enunciated in American, but it sounds something like *litrrry* in British speech.

The following words illustrate the American retention of a secondary accent. Included are words ending in *-ary*, *-ery*, *-ory*, *-ative*, *-ony*, *-nce*, and *-ncy*. The primary accent falls on the capitalized syllable, the secondary on the italicized syllable.

acCELerative	CONtroversy	MILitary
acCUmulative	CUmulative	MISsionary
acCUmulator	DIctionary	NECessary
adMINistrative	DORmitory	NECromancy
ALimony	ePIStolary	ORDinary
apPREciative	INDicatory	PALLiative
auTHORizative	inItiative	SECondary
CEMeTery	LABoratory	SECretary
CERemony	LEGislative	SEDentary
COMbinative	LIbrary	TESTimony
COMmentary	MATrimony	VISIONary
conCILiatory	MELancholy	

Sometimes the primary accent has shifted in British with the result that the final syllables of the word are not obscured. For the American "LABoratory," the British substitute "laBORatory," with a faint but perceptible secondary accent on the *tor*. So also with the word "COrollary," which is pronounced coROLLary. Other words so pronounced by the British are:

axILLary
bacCILary

caPILLary
caTENary

cenTENary

THE PRONUNCIATION OF CERTAIN VOWEL SOUNDS

In addition to differences of stress in words, American and British differences may be noted in the uses of certain vowel sounds.

FLAT *a* vs. BROAD *a*

Broad *a* ("ah") is the sound represented by the letter *a* in most European languages. In English it is found in the word *father*. In early times it was as often encountered in English as in modern European tongues, but it has given way to other sounds in comparatively recent times. Sometimes combinations of letters are used to represent it. *Guard*, *heart*, *hearth*, *sergeant* are examples of this, as are these British pronunciations:

clerk	(<i>k̄lar̄k̄</i>)
derby	(<i>d̄arby</i>)
Berkshire	(<i>Bark̄shire</i>)

The word *varsity*, a colloquial shortening of *university*, reminds us of the older pronunciation by preserving the broad *a*.

Broad *a* occurs, too, in ultra-fashionable pronunciations of the following words:

amen	(<i>ah-men</i>)
drama	(<i>drah-mah</i>)
tomato	(<i>tomah-to</i>)
rather	(<i>rah-ther</i>)
vase	(<i>vah-ss</i>)

Except in singing, *amen* is pronounced *a-men*, with the long *a* of *mate*. *Tomato* and *vase* have this long *a* also, and *rather* is pronounced with the *a* of *ask*.

Broad *a* occurs regularly in American in the following situations:

(1) Before *lm* when *l* is silent:

alms	calm	psalm
balm	palm	

(2) In these words:

father	watt	whatever
watch	what	

(3) Before *r* or *r'* + a consonant:

arbitrary	charm	parch
arbitration	charter	pardon
arbor	dark	park
arch	dart	parley
Arctic	far	parlor
ardent	farm	parsley
argosy	farther	part
argument	garbage	sarcastic
Arkansas	garden	sardine
arm	garlic	scar
arsenal	garter	scarf
art	harbor	scarlet
bar	hard	sharp
barb	harmony	spar
bard	harness	spark
bargain	harpoon	sparse
barge	jar	star
bark	lard	starch
barter	large	start
car	lark	starve
carbide	marble	tar
carbine	march	tardy
carbolic	margarine	target
card	margin	tart
cargo	marjoram	varlet
carnage	market	varsity
carpet	marsh	yard
carve	martyr	yarn
char	narcotic	
charge	parboil	

The word *France* is pronounced by most persons in the south of England as it is in French: with the broad *a* of *father*. Most Americans, however, give the principal vowel of *France* either a flat *a* sound as in *rack* or use a sound intermediate between the two, as in *ask*. The following list includes the words pronounced with broad *a* in England, most of which have flat *a* (as in *hat* and *add*) or intermediate *a* in American speech:

advance	chant	last
advantage	clasp	lath
aft	class	laugh
after	command	mask
aghast	craft	mast
answer	daft	master
ask	dance	nasty
aunt	disaster	paragraph
avalanche	distaff	pass
bask	draft	passable
basket	enchant	Passover
bath	example	past
behalf	fast	pastime
blanch	fasten	pastor
Blanche	flabbergast	path
blast	Flanders	plant
branch	flask	plaster
brass	France	prance
broadcast	Frances	raft
calf	Francis	rafter
can't	gasp	rascal
cask	ghastly	rasp
casket	giraffe	raspberry
cast	glance	rather
caste	glass	repast
caster	graft	salve
castle	grant	sample
chaff	graph	sampler
chance	grass	shaft
chancel	grasp	shan't
chancellor	half	slander
chancery	halve	slant
chandler	lance	staff

stanch	trance	translate
stanchion	transgress	vantage
supplant	transitive	vast
task		

The pronunciation of these words constitutes one of the most often-noted differences between British and American speech. It is worth observing that spelling is little or no help in determining the pronunciation of individual words. Although *example* has broad *a* in Southern British, *ample* and *damp* have the flat *a* of *rack*. Likewise, the pronunciation of the word *command* does not indicate that of *band*, *contraband*, *expand*, *land*, and *brand*, all of which have flat *a* in British as in American.

Some Americans have the mistaken idea that broad *a* is a sign of culture and is somehow more respectable than flat *a*. This has led to curious errors in pronunciation. For example, most British speakers use the flat *a* in the word *fancy*, despite a general American belief that they say *fahncy*. Inevitably this misconception will lead such persons to use broad *a* in such words as these:

mass	man	romance
gas	sat	

In all of these Southern British speakers prefer the flat *a*.

THE *aw* SOUND

The letter *a* sometimes has the sound of *aw* as in these words and many others:

all	dwarf	walk
ball	fall	water
call	talk	

This sound, indicated ô, was much more frequently heard in the eighteenth century than it is today. For example, the word *spa* is now given the broad *a* of *father* but formerly was pronounced "spaw." In some words the spelling indicates the sound:

daughter	Santa Claus	cole slaw
----------	-------------	-----------

The sound is also heard in the General American pronunciation of such place names as:

Chicago
Omaha

Arkansas
Utah

THE LONG *e*

Both American and British speakers use a long *e* (as in *eve*) at the beginning of a number of words:

ebriety	equal	era
ebrious	equanimity	ether
economic	equatorial	Ethiopian
edict	equidistant	ethos
educt	equilateral	etiolate
egress	equilibrate	Eton
eject	equilibrium	evangelical
eke	equine	eve
eland	equinoctial	even
emu	equinox	evening
eocene	equipoise	evil

A somewhat shorter *e* (as in *event*) is preferred by American speakers for certain words in which the British are careful to retain long *e*. Except in precise and rather formal American speech, this initial *e* is very close to *i*.

ebullient	elucidate	enucleate
electricity	elude	ethereal
elongate	emeritus	

American usage prefers short *e* (as in *end*) as opposed to long *e* in British for these words:

enema	equable	ethology
epoch	equivoque	evolution

PRONOUNCING *Either* AND *Neither*

The pronunciation of the words *either* and *neither* has been discussed for many years. Webster announced his preference for

ee-ther and *nee-ther*, but the words were already heard in his day on both sides of the Atlantic as *eye-ther* and *nye-ther*. The latter pronunciations were common in New England, but at no time were they the accepted ones either here or abroad. No one seems to know how they began but they appear destined, if not to supplant *ee-ther* and *nee-ther*, at least to continue to flourish along with them.

THE PRONUNCIATION OF *u*

The letter *u* may be pronounced in several ways, as in *hut*, *pure*, and *crude*. Recently the *y* part of the sound as in *pure* has been neglected by many people, who convert that sound to the *u* of *crude*. It has been suggested that the current popularity of the word *absolutely*, often used as an exclamation, has hastened this natural tendency. However, we may note here the occasions when each of these sounds may be properly used.

Initially, *u* has the sound *yoo* except when followed by two consonant sounds:

ubiquity	usufruct	utilitarian
union	usurer	utilize
unit	usurp	utopian
usually	usury	uvula
use		

After all consonants except *j*, *r*, and sometimes *l*, the letter *u* is pronounced *yoo* as in these words and many others:

abuse	mute	Tuesday
cube	pure	tulip
human	stupid	tune

When *j* or *r* precedes the *u*, the pronunciation is *oo*:

accrue	cruel	juice
adjure	druid	rue
cherubic	June	rule
crude	jute	true

Lu is pronounced *lyoo* in these words:

ablution	collusion	illuminate
allude	delude	illusion
allure	delusion	postlude
allusion	elucidate	prelude
aluminum	elude	resolution
antediluvian	elusion	solution

Lu is pronounced *loo* in these words:

agglutinate	flue	include
blue	fluid	inclusion
clue	flute	seclude
conclude	glue	seclusion
conclusion	gluten	sluice

AMERICAN AND BRITISH DIFFERENCES IN THE PRONUNCIATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS

In the following words, American pronunciation differs from British:

	AMERICAN	BRITISH
advertisement	ădvertîz'měnt*	ădvûr'tizměnt
anemic	anē'mîk	anēm'îk
aristocrat	ăris'tôkrăt	ăr'istôkrăt
buoyant	bōō'yănt	boi'ănt
courteous	kûr'těūs	kôr'tyūs
dahlia	dāl'ya	dāl'ya
dais	dă'is	dās
decadence	děkă'dens	děk'ădens

*Key to Pronunciation: The primary stress mark (') and the secondary stress mark (") follow the syllable to be accented. The diacritical markings represent the following sounds: âte, vâcation, âsk, pârent, pâck, partial, pârt; êvil, êvent, thêre, hêm, baker; îce, sît, scarcîty; bôld, ôpen, nôrth, nôt, seldom; ûnit, ûnite, tûrn, pûn, minus; fôod, fôot; ou represents the vowel sound in *now*; z represents the s of *has* and the z of *zoo*; zh represents the z in *azure*; s represents the s of *sand* and the c of *vice*; j represents the j of *judge* and the g of *plunge*; g represents the g of *gate*; hw represents the wh in *where*.

	AMERICAN	BRITISH
demonstrate	dēm'ʌnstrāt	dēmŏn'strāt
depot	dē'pō	dē'pō
divan	dī'vān	dīvān'
docile	dōs'īl	dō'sīl
dynasty	dī'nastī	dīn'astī
ego	ē'gō	ēg'ō
extraordinary	ēkstrōr'dīnēr''i	īkstrō'dnrī
fecund	fē'kʌnd	fēk'ʌnd
fetish	fē'tīsh	fēt'īsh
fidelity	fīdēl'itī	fīdēl'itī
fratricidal	frāt''rīsīd'al	frā'trīsī''dal
frontier	frūntēr'	frŏn'tēr
geyser	gī'zer	gā'ser
gibberish	jīb'erīsh	gīb'erīsh
guillotine	gīl'ōtēn	gīlōtēn'
hegira	hējī'ra	hēj'ira
herb	ûrb	hûrb
hostler	hōs'ler	ōs'ler
hygiene	hī'jēn	hī'jien
hypodermic	hīpōdûr'mīk	hīpōdûr'mīk
hypotenuse	hīpōt'ēnūs	hīpōt'ēnūs
hypothesis	hīpōth'ēsīs	hīpōth'ēsīs
improvise	īm'prōvīz	īmprōvīz'
inculpate	īnkŭl'pāt	īn'kŭlpāt
indecorous	īndēk'ōrūs	īndēkō'rūs
inlaid	īnlād'	īn'lād
inquiry	īnkwīr'ī	īnkwīe'rī
interesting	īn'terēstīng	īn'trīstīng
iodine	ī'ōdīn	ī'ōdīn
irrefutable	īrēf'ūtāb'l	īrēfūt'āb'l
isthmus	īs'mūs	īsth'mūs

	AMERICAN	BRITISH
jeans	jēnz	jānz
jowl	joul	jōl
jugular	jūg'ūler	jōō'gūlār
juvenile	jōō'venīl	jōō'venīl
leghorn	lēg'hōrn	lēgōrn'
leisure	lē'zher	lēzh'ūr
matutinal	matū'tinal	mātūtī'nal
medieval	mēdīē'val	mēdīē'val
mercantile	mūr'kantīl	mūr'kantīl
mimetic	mīmēt'īk	mīmēt'īk
miscellany	mīs'ēlānī	mīsēl'anī
misconstrue	mīskonstrōō'	mīskōn'strōō
morphine	mōr'fēn	mōr'fīn
necessary	nēs'esēr''ī	nēs'isrī
nephew	nēf'ū	nēv'ū
nomad	nō'mād	nōm'ad
objurgate	ōb'jergāt	ōbjūr'gāt
obligatory	ōblig'atōrī	ōb'līgaterī
octopus	ōk'tōpus	ōktō'pus
oleomargarine	ōlēōmār'jarēn	ōliomār'garēn
omega	ōmē'ga	ō'mēga
opus	ō'pus	ōp'us
ordeal	ōrdē'al	ōr'dēal
orientate	ō'riēntāt	ōriēn'tāt
paternoster	pā'ternōs'ter	pāt'ernōs'ter
patronage	pā'trunīj	pāt'runīj
patronize	pā'trunīz	pāt'runīz
pekoe	pē'kō	pēk'ō
peremptory	perēmp'tōrī	pēr'ēmterī
phalanx	fā'lāngks	fāl'āngks
pianist	pīān'īst	pē'anīst

	AMERICAN	BRITISH
pistachio	pĭstăsh'ĩō	pĭstă'shĩō
predecessor	prĕd'ĕsĕser	prĕdĕsĕs'er
premier	prĕ'mĭer	prĕm'ĭer
primer (book)	prĭm'er	prĭ'mer
pristine	prĭs'tĕn	prĭst'in
process	prōs'ĕs	prō'sĕs
profile	prō'fil	prō'fĕl
progress	prōg'rĕs	prō'grĕs
promulgation	prō''mŭlgă'shŭn	prōmŭlgă'shŭn
ptomaine	tō'mān	ptō'māin
quandary	kwŏn'darĭ	kwŏndâr'ĭ
quinine	kwĭ'nĭn	kwĭnĕn'
quoit	kwoit	koit
renaissance	rĕn''ĕsăns'	rĕnă'sans
retail (v.)	rĕ'tāl	rĕtāl'
retroact	rĕtrŏăkt'	rĕtrŏăkt'
retrovert	rĕtrŏvŭrt'	rĕtrŏvŭrt'
ricochet	rĭkŏshă'	rĭk'ŏshĕt
righteous	rĭ'chŭs	rĭ'tyŭs
scenario	sĕnă'rĭō	shănă'rĭō
schedule	skĕd'ŭl	shĕd'ŭl
schottische	shŏt'ĭsh	shŏtĕsh'
servile	sŭr'vĭl	sŭr'vĭl
sheik	shĕk	shāk
simultaneous	sĭ''mŭltă'nĕus	sĭmŭltă'nĕus
ski	skĕ	shĕ
solder	sŏd'er	sŏl'der
sovereign	sŏv'erĭn	sŏv'rĭn
squirrel	skwŭr'el	skwĭr'el
strychnine	strĭk'nĭn	strĭk'nĕn
suave	swäv	swāv

	AMERICAN	BRITISH
suggest	sŭgjest'	sŭjest'
sumac	shoo'măk	sū'măk
taximeter	tăk'simē'ter	tăksim'eter
tetrarch	tē'trărk	tēt'rărk
tirade	tī'răd	tīrăd'
tomato	tômă'tō	tômă'tō
trait	trăt	trā
troth	trōth	trōth
tryst	trĭst	trĭst
vaccine	văk'sēn	văk'sĭn
vase	vās	văz
venison	vēn'iz'n	vēn'z'n
violoncello	vē''ôlônchĕl'ô	vī''ôlônsl'ô
virile	vĭr'ĭl	vĭr'ĭl
waistcoat	wăst'kôt	wēs'kût
were (v.)	wŭr	wâr
whorl	hwŭrl	hwôrĭ
wont (n.)	wŭnt	wōnt
wrath	răth	rôth
zenith	zē'nĭth	zēn'ĭth

AMERICAN CONSERVATISM IN PRONUNCIATION

As a general rule American pronunciation tends to be more conservative than British; that is, we incline to pronounce all the sounds in a word. We have already stated that most Americans retain *r* before a consonant, as in *morning*, and in a terminal position, as in *floor* (Eastern and Southern speakers resemble the British in the matter of the terminal *r*). Where the British are careless about *l*, *d*, *g*, and *t*, Americans are not. *Kindness*, *blindness* have a recognizable *d* in General American. Whereas the practice of changing final *ng* to *n*, as in *burnin'*, is frowned upon

here, it is considered fashionable in certain British circles. British speakers are inclined to say *goo'bye* for *goodbye*.

AMERICAN PRONUNCIATION OF FOREIGN WORDS AND NAMES

Like most speakers in most languages, Americans find it convenient to naturalize the pronunciation of foreign words and names that have come into the language and are used frequently. Words like *detour*, *menu*, *cafeteria*, *frankfurter*, and *scenario* are pronounced without regard for their foreign origin. However, in some words, traces of foreign origin remain. In *lingerie* and *ingenue*, for example, the first syllables are pronounced almost as in French, while the remainder of the words have been Americanized.

The pronunciation of names of foreign origin varies with the name and the bearer of the name. Names of Americans and of American places which are of a foreign origin are usually shorn of their foreign sound. Thus *Di Maggio*, *Cerutti*, *Du Bois*, *Muller*, *Weber*, *Kovacs*, *Los Angeles*, and *New Orleans* are Americanized. As far as the personal names are concerned, the owners usually prefer the American pronunciations, for, in this way, emphasis on their foreign origin is diverted. A few American place names retain something of their original pronunciation. The pronunciation of *Des Moines*, for example, is a compromise. In the first word, the French influence is seen in the dropping of the *s* sound. In the second, the *oi* is pronounced as in American, but, French-wise, the final *s* is silent. *Sault Sainte Marie* is gallicized to the extent that the first word is made into *Soo* (the French would pronounce it *Sō*). In *San Jose* the *j* is generally pronounced *h* as in Spanish.

Some attempt is made to pronounce the names of prominent foreigners as they are pronounced in their native countries, but, when to do so involves too great a break with American practice, the attempt is generally abandoned. Thus *Georges Clemenceau*, *Charles de Gaulle*, *Jules Verne*, and *d'Annunzio* are greatly naturalized, as are *Lenin*, *Stalin*, *Toscanini*, *Franco*, *Wilhelmina*,

and *Undset*. However, the greater awareness of foreign sounds and orthography on the part of radio announcers and speakers has resulted in a wider use of original pronunciations, and one hears such names as *Beethoven* (Bätoven), *Wagner* (Vägner), *Weber* (Vāber), *Tchaikovsky* (Chikūfskē), and *Chopin* (Shōpăn) pronounced more and more as in the original languages.

IV

American and British Word Meanings

A GREAT deal of the difference between American and British language practice may be accounted for not only by differences in spelling and pronunciation but also by the variant meanings and usages of individual words. Undoubtedly there is a great store of words that are held in common and are known and understood to have the same meanings on both sides of the Atlantic. Nevertheless there are many words which Americans and Britishers do not share. These words either do not exist in both languages or, if existing, do not mean the same in each of the languages. Until comparatively recently it was possible to explain these differences by saying that first-hand contacts between the two countries were limited to a comparatively small number of American and English persons. But with the coming of World War I and the subsequent development of the radio and film industries, this generalization became less valid. During the interval between the two World Wars, American movies invaded the British Isles, and the advent of sound films made the American language something to be reckoned with not only in England but throughout the world. Englishmen began to adopt certain Americanisms almost without realizing that they were doing so. Words that were vivid and expressive appealed to Englishmen in much the same way that they appealed to Americans and often the word was one that was definitely needed in the language.

During World War II, many American soldiers were stationed in England for long periods of time. As was to be expected, their language came in for frequent comment in the English press, and one may suspect that the soldiers themselves became familiar for the first time with many British words for ordinary things. Probably they adopted British terms without the slightest reluc-

tance, just as American residents in England have always done.

It would be too much to expect even the close contact between peoples during World War II to eliminate the differences between American and British vocabularies, nor would this necessarily be desirable even if it were possible. Languages change, but they change slowly. Perhaps the most that one can expect of such personal contact is a greater tolerance in the matter of vocabulary differences.

SAME MEANINGS COVERED BY DIFFERENT WORDS

In the course of time, certain terms have come to be preferred to others in the two countries to express the same meaning. In America we hear of a *brakeman* rather than of a *brakesman*, of a *poorhouse* rather than an *almshouse*, of *coal* rather than of *coals*, and of the *second hand* of a watch rather than of the *seconds hand*. We prefer *faucet* to *tap*, *mail* to *post*, and *checkers* to *draughts*.

For the most part, these variants cause little trouble. Americans read British novels and detective stories; Englishmen read American publications and attend American talking-pictures. If occasionally the American reader is baffled by such expressions as *he sported his oak* (meaning "he closed the outer door of his room to exclude visitors") he is not likely to have much trouble understanding the man who *threw a spanner into the works*.

Any reader of a British novel can, if he is at all observant, construct an impressive list of such differences. Within a few pages in a recent detective story by a British author, the American reader finds the following British usages:

windscreen	(windshield)
buttered eggs	(scrambled eggs)
treacle	(molasses)
bonnet	(hood of a car)
boots	(shoes)
certifiable	(insane)
stone-ginger	(a ginger drink)
white wax	(paraffin)
chemist	(druggist)

Often the context will make the meaning clear. Sometimes it will not. An American cook would have difficulty using a British cook book (or *cookery-book*, as it is called in England), and a British motorist could not, without special training, be expected to understand an American manual of instructions for repairing his car.

No list of equivalents such as that which follows can be expected to go unchallenged. Some of the differences in vocabulary between British and American are disappearing, thanks to the continuing interest shown by most Englishmen in American words and phrases. But enough differences survive to suggest that we are dealing with different languages and that neither can be expected to replace the other.

AMERICAN	BRITISH
absorbent cotton	cotton wool
admit to the bar	call to the bar
advertising manager	advertisement manager
aisle (in a theater)	gangway
alcohol lamp	spirit lamp
ale	beer; bitter
alumnus, alumna	graduate
apartment	flat
apartment-hotel	service flats
apartment house	block of flats
ashcan	dust bin
ashman	dustman
automobile	motor-car
baby carriage	perambulator; pram
baggage	luggage
baggage car	luggage van
bakery	baker's shop
banked (of a curve)	superelevated
bathrobe	dressing-gown

AMERICAN	BRITISH
bathhtub	bath
beach	seaside
beer	lager
beet	beetroot
bellboy, bellhop	page; buttons
blank	form
blow torch	brazing lamp
boulevard	arterial road; trunk road
bowling alley	skittle alley
box car	covered waggon
brief case	portfolio
business suit	lounge suit
calendar (of a court)	cause list
candy	sweets
candy store	sweetshop
cane	stick
car (of a railroad)	carriage
carnival	fun-fair
catalogue (college)	calendar
catnip	catmint
check (in a restaurant)	bill
checkers (the game)	draughts
check room	left-luggage office
cheesecloth	butter-muslin
cigar store	tobacconist's shop
cigarette butt	cigarette end
clipping (newspaper)	cutting
closet	cupboard
clothespin	clothespeg
collar button	collar stud

AMERICAN	BRITISH
commencement	speech day
cone (for ice cream)	cornet
cop	bobby
corporation	limited liability company
custom-made (as of clothes)	bespoke, made to measure
denatured alcohol	methyiated spirit
detour	road diversion
dining car	restaurant car
dipper (for water)	pannikin
dishpan	washing-up bowl
dock	wharf
domestic mails	inland mails
drygoods store	draper's shop
dumbwaiter	service lift
dump	refuse tip
editorial	leading article; leader
engineer (of a locomotive)	engine driver
expelled (from college)	sent down
filling station	petrol pump
fire department	fire brigade
fish dealer	fishmonger
flophouse	doss house
frame house	wooden house
fraternal order	friendly society
freight car	goods waggon
gasoline, gas	petrol
general delivery	poste restante
grade (in a school)	form; standard; class
ground-wire (radio)	earth wire

AMERICAN	BRITISH
guard (in a prison)	warder
hall, hallway (private house)	passage
hardware	ironmongery
hash	shepherd's pie
highball	whiskey and soda
hike (verb)	tramp
hockey	ice-hockey
horn (automobile)	hooter
hospital	nursing-home
information bureau	inquiry office
inning	innings
installment plan	hire-purchase system
insurance (life)	assurance
intermission (at the theater)	interval
legal holiday	bank holiday
letter-man (at college)	blue
life-guard	life-saver
life preserver	life-belt
line up (verb)	queue up
long-distance (telephone)	trunk
low gear (of an automobile)	first speed
mail	post; letters
molasses	treacle
monkey wrench	spanner
motorman	driver
movie, movies	cinema
napkin (table)	serviette
newsstand	bookstall; kiosk
nightstick (policeman's)	truncheon
oarlock	rowlock
on (a street)	in

AMERICAN	BRITISH
overcoat	greatcoat
paraffin	white wax
parking lot	car-park
patrolman (police)	constable
pen-point	nib
period (punctuation)	full stop
phonograph	gramophone
poolroom	billiards-saloon
poorhouse	almshouse
postpaid	post-free
pry (to raise or separate)	prise
public school	council school
pushcart	barrow
race track	race course
radio	wireless
railroad	railway
raincoat	waterproof; mackin- tosh
raise (an increase in pay)	rise
rare (of meat)	underdone
recess (in school)	break
roadster (automobile)	two-seater
roast (of meat)	joint
room-clerk (of a hotel)	reception clerk
roomer	lodger
rooster	cock
round trip	return trip
rumble seat	dickey
run (for office)	stand
scab (labor)	black leg
scrambled eggs	buttered eggs

AMERICAN	BRITISH
scratch pad	scribbling block
scrimmage (football)	scrum
shingle (professional sign)	brass plate
silent partner	sleeping partner
silverware	plate
slacks	bags
soda fountain	soda-bar
speed cop	mobile police
spigot, faucet	tap
spool (of thread)	reel
squash	vegetable marrow
stenographer	shorthand writer
store	shop
straight (of a drink)	neat
straw hat	boater
streetcar	tram
street cleaner	road sweeper
sugar bowl	sugar basin
suspenders	braces
taffy	toffee
taxes (local)	rates
taxi stand	cab rank
telephone booth	call box
thumb tack	drawing pin
ticket agent (railroad)	booking clerk
tie (railroad)	sleepers
top (automobile)	hood
touchdown (football)	try
transom	fanlight
transport (military ship)	troopship
truck	lorry

AMERICAN	BRITISH
truck-farmer	market gardener
tube (radio)	wireless valve
union suit	combinations
vaudeville	variety
vaudeville theater	music hall
warden (of a prison)	governor
weather bureau	meteorological office
white-collar (worker)	black-coat
windshield (of an automobile)	windscreen
witness stand	witness box
wrecking crew	breakdown gang

DIFFERENT MEANINGS COVERED BY THE SAME WORDS

In the previous section, we considered the different words used in American and English to express the same thing or idea. Here we want to discuss just the reverse situation; that is, the use of the same words to denote different things or ideas.

In America, there are many words which we use with a meaning wholly different from that of the same word in England. The word *precinct*, for example, indicates a political subdivision for election and police purposes on this side of the Atlantic and denotes an enclosed space, often including a place of worship, in England. An American *hunts* all kinds of animals and birds, whereas the Englishman restricts the verb *hunt* to the pursuit of stags, foxes, otters, and hares. Thus in America the word has been extended, as has the word *freight*, which the English apply only to goods transported by water. Occasionally a word current in American usage has become obsolete in England. *Tardy*, for example, in the sense of "behind time, unpunctual" is rarely heard in English usage.

The history of the word *store* in America and in England will

illustrate how local conditions often lead to a change in connotation. The English *store* means a *storehouse*; *shop* is the English term for anything smaller than a great establishment such as a department store. Thus an Englishman speaks of grocers, butchers, and the like as *shopkeepers*. The American preference for *store* may be traced to the fact that in early colonial days a "shop" was also a "store" in the sense of storehouse. *Chain stores* are called *multiple shops* in England.

There has been some tendency in recent times to borrow the English *shop* (sometimes in its pseudo-antique form *shoppe*) for places that otherwise would be called stores. But in general, American usage has preserved this distinction: a *shop* is a place for manufacture or repair; a *store* is for sales. *Barber shop* (British *barber's shop* or *hairdresser's*) is in good repute. A place in which medicinal drugs are sold we call a *drugstore*; in England it would be called the *druggist's* or the *chemist's*.

There are a number of words with special meanings in America as opposed to the special meanings in England. For some of them, an English dictionary such as the *Concise Oxford* will record the "American" meaning along with the special meaning or meanings which have come to be associated with the word in England. In like manner, an American dictionary such as *Webster's Collegiate* may include British meanings, sometimes specially labeled and sometimes not.

In the following list, words are recorded which probably suggest different things to the average American and the average Englishman. As a general rule, only the conflicting meanings are given.

LIST COMPARING MEANINGS OF WORDS

- alderman.** To an Englishman, *alderman* means a magistrate; to an American, a member of the governing body of a city.
- baggage.** An Englishman uses the term *luggage* for what an American often calls *baggage*, i.e., belongings with which one travels. In English usage, *baggage* means the portable equipment of an army.

- bill.** In America, a *bill* often means a *bank* note, such as a five-dollar *bill*; the English prefer the term *bank note*. In both countries, a *bill* may be a poster, but in America it is put on a *billboard* and in England on a *hoarding*.
- billion.** One thousand million in America (and in France); one million million in England.
- biscuits.** Biscuits in America are usually small cakes of raised bread. The English use the term to denote what Americans call *crackers* or *cookies*.
- blackjack.** In America, a small, leather-covered club, weighted at the end; in England, a tarred-leather wine bottle.
- boots.** Americans mean an article of apparel made of leather or rubber covering the feet and part or all of the leg; the English apply the term to a shoe that covers the ankle. In England, too, the boy who cleans them is known as the "boots."
- bout.** The word *bout* suggests a conflict of some sort, a set-to, to an American; to an Englishman it suggests a spell or turn of work or exercise, a fit of drinking or illness.
- bug.** A general term in America for *insect*. In England, *bug* means *bedbug*.
- can (n.).** To an American, *can* means a tin can; to an Englishman, it means a metal vessel usually with a handle over the top. In English usage, *tin* is preferred to the American *can*.
- chemist.** In America, a *chemist* is one versed in chemistry; in England, the word also means an apothecary or druggist.
- cookies.** See *biscuits*.
- chips.** *Chips*, to an Englishman, are what Americans call *French-fried potatoes*. What the American calls *potato-chips* the Englishman calls *crisps*.
- conductor.** See *guard*.
- corn.** *Corn* is a general term in English usage, meaning grain such as wheat or oats; in America, it means specifically *maize* or Indian corn.

crackers. See *biscuits*.

drains. In America, a specific means of drainage such as a sink; in England, the sewerage system of a house.

elevator. Americans think first of an ascending chamber in a building when they see this word. To an Englishman, it suggests a machine for raising grain or flour from one story to another. For "passenger elevator" the English have the word *lift*.

first floor. This is the "ground floor" in America; it is up one flight in England.

gangway. An American thinks first of a passageway onto a ship; an Englishman thinks of an *aisle*, as in a theater.

geyser. The English commonly use *geyser* as the name of a water-heater; to most Americans, it means a spring of heated water or steam, as in Yellowstone Park.

guard. Americans speak of life-guards and subway-guards but prefer the word *conductor* for the railroad employee, called a *guard* by the British.

gum. To most Americans this word means *chewing gum*; the British often use it as the equivalent of the American *mucilage*.

hoarding. See *bill*.

hood. As applied to automobiles, *hood* in America means a covering for the motor, in England, a covering for the car itself.

junk. *Junk*, to an American, means rubbish or odds and ends; to an Englishman it has the more specialized meaning of old cable or rope cut up, and a *junk-shop* is a *marine store*.

lift. See *elevator*.

luggage. See *baggage*.

lumber. To an American, *lumber* suggests timber, boards, planks; to an Englishman it suggests rubbish stored in an attic.

mad. Americans often say *mad* without meaning to suggest insanity; the English as a rule are careful to say *angry*.

- minerals.** What Americans call *soft drinks*, the English refer to as *minerals*.
- mucilage.** See *gum*.
- notions.** Americans sometimes use the term *notions* for what would be called in England *small wares*, especially cheap and useful articles.
- pants.** *Trousers* in America; *men's underdrawers* in England.
- paraffin.** In America, an inflammable, waxy substance; in England the equivalent of the American *coal oil* or *kerosene*. It is sometimes called *paraffin oil*.
- pavement.** *Pavement* in America means the paved covering of a street or road; in England it is a synonym for the American *sidewalk*.
- penitentiary.** To an Englishman, *penitentiary* means *reformatory*, not *prison*.
- publisher.** *Publisher* means *book publisher* in England. The British speak of the *proprietor*, not the *publisher* of a newspaper.
- radiator.** *Radiator*, to an American, is a heating-device such as a steam-radiator; to an Englishman it is an electric-heater.
- recess.** Americans use the word *recess* to mean an interval during school hours; the English think of it as meaning a longer vacation, such as of Parliament.
- rock.** A *rock* in American usage is a piece of stone, large or small; the English restrict it to a large mass of stone.
- rubbers.** To an American, the word *rubbers* most often means rubber overshoes; an Englishman is more likely to think of india-rubber erasers.
- sidewalk.** See *pavement*.
- sirloin.** For the American term *sirloin* the British use the term *rump*, and for the American term *porterhouse* use the term *sirloin*.
- soft drinks.** See *minerals*.

- stall.** The English use the term *stall* for what Americans refer to as an *orchestra seat* in a theater.
- subway.** *Subway* suggests to an Englishman an underground passageway enabling pedestrians to pass below a street; what the American calls the subway the Englishman calls the *underground*.
- suspenders.** In America, two straps for supporting trousers, known in England as *braces*. To an Englishman, *suspenders* mean as a rule sock-suspenders, called *garters* in America.
- tap.** The English prefer the word *tap* to the American *faucet*.
- tart.** In America, *tart* means a small shell of pastry containing jelly or custard; in England it means what Americans call a fruit pie.
- torch.** A *torch* to most Americans is a flaming stick; to an Englishman it is what the American calls a *flashlight*.
- trolley.** *Trolley* stands for *streetcar* in America; in England it may mean a *pushcart*.
- truck.** A large motor vehicle for carrying heavy materials, called a *lorry* in England. A *truck* in England is usually a railroad car.
- underground.** See *subway*.
- vest.** What the American man calls his *vest* the Englishman calls his *waistcoat*. An Englishman's vest is his *undershirt*.

DIFFERENCES IN GRAMMATICAL USAGE

Less easy to define than vocabulary differences are a number of usages characteristic of British and American. Perhaps the most noticeable of these is the British habit of regarding collective nouns as plurals. Englishmen say, "The club *are* holding a meeting" whereas Americans say, "The club *is* holding a meeting." Such nouns we treat as singular unless the separate members are thought of as acting individually:

The jury *has* reached a decision.

The jury *were* taken to their several homes in taxis.

American usage seems to prefer the definite article in a number of situations in which British usage omits it:

AMERICAN

BRITISH

<i>The doctor</i> came in at six.	<i>Doctor</i> came in at six.
<i>The cook</i> has given notice.	<i>Cook</i> has given notice.

Conversely, the British retain the article in an expression like "He drove down *the* High Street" and use it also in the expression "five shillings *the* bushel." An American equivalent would be "one dollar *a* bushel."

An Englishman says "Give me the book" as does the American, but whereas the American says "Give me it" or "Give it to me" the Englishman often uses the form "Give it me."

American usage has favored the present subjunctive in such a sentence as "They insisted that he *be* there punctually." English usage prefers the form "that he *should be* there."

Many Englishmen have commented on the American fondness for verb-adverb combinations, some of which began as slang or colloquial expressions but proved useful and have been generally accepted.

put across	(secure the adoption of)
pass up	(decline)

In other combinations, the adverb contributes little or nothing:

lose out	(lose)
check up	(check)
start in	(start)

What is known as the "one . . . he" construction is also characteristic of American usage. It is discouraged by teachers but seems to be making headway. An Englishman says "*One* should not hesitate when *one* is asked to give *one's* opinion." An American renders this: "*One* should not hesitate when *he* is asked to give *his* opinion" or, more informally, "*You* shouldn't hesitate when *you're* asked to give *your* opinion."

Gotten, a past participle of *get*, is seldom heard in England, and many Americans avoid it because it has a certain archaic flavor. A good many Americans, however, find the expression "They said they *had gotten* up early to see the sun rise" perfectly natural.

Words from the New World

TO the early Americans who settled here in the seventeenth century their new country was a land that was both strange and challenging. Armed with the skills and habits they had brought with them from their old homes, they had to build shelters, till the soil, establish communities and govern them, and trade with the Indians and with one another. When these activities could be carried on as they were in the Old World, these skills and habits were satisfactory; when they were found lacking in one respect or another they had to be adapted or discarded completely and new ones acquired.

In the same way the language of the early Americans was necessarily modified and expanded as conditions required; and in this way the English received many additions from the New World. While the vocabulary that the English colonists had used in England was adequate for most basic activities, the new life required new terms and words for the many new things they found and did here. If no words existed in English to describe adequately certain American animals, for example, it was a simple matter to use two English words together and get such new terms as *bull-frog*, *groundhog*, *catfish*. This process of joining two old words together to form a new word which means something different from either of the two old ones is called *compounding* and is a process that continues today to enlarge the language. Another method of adapting the vocabulary to new conditions was simply to borrow words that other people had used for things, actions, or places. In the case of the English colonists in America, this meant borrowing words from the Indians whom they found here when they arrived and from the Dutch, French, Spanish, and other European settlers with whom they had contact. It is inter-

esting to note that the nature of the words that were taken over from these languages depended on the kinds of contacts the settlers had with them. Thus, for example, our Indian borrowings have to do with animals, plants, places, and transportation, for it was in these areas that the white man learned from the Indian and adopted his ways. Rather than invent new names for them, the settlers found it most convenient to take over into English the Indians' words. A similar observation may be made about the words adapted from the Dutch, many of whose farm, household, and transportation words seemed to fill a need in the English used by the colonists. On the other hand, contact with the French was made on the frontier so that many of our French borrowings are words which refer to hunting, trapping, and travel in wild country. Most American words of Spanish origin were taken over after we had moved across the great plains west of the Mississippi, where the Spanish had been engaged in ranching. Spanish, incidentally, has contributed more words to American English than any other Continental language.

In this chapter we list the words which we have compounded and adapted from English and those which we have borrowed from other languages. Where it is known, we indicate the date when the use of the word or term was first noted. It is interesting to observe that in the case of words from the Dutch the years postdate Dutch influence on the language by many decades. The reason for this is that most of the dates refer to the word's first appearance in print, and it was not until the early nineteenth century that Dutch loan words were used extensively by writers, Washington Irving among others. Today a new word may be in print a few months after it is coined; in earlier times a word might pass current in speech for years before it was found on a printed page. So, while the discrepancy in time is most striking in the case of the Dutch words, it no doubt holds true to some extent with words from other languages and with the adaptations of English words. We can only speculate as to how long before 1819 an exaggerated or incredible tale was called a *fish story* or how long people referred to a cemetery as a *graveyard* before the term was used in print.

COMPOUNDS AND ADAPTATIONS OF ENGLISH WORDS

The words in this list are all the result of some operation on native English words. As we have explained, compounding is the joining of two or more English words to form a new term, as in *logrolling* and *bellboy*. Adaptations are changes in the form or meaning of old words, as in *abolitionize* and *buffalo* (as a verb). Both processes are natural mechanisms of change in language, but the freedom with which compounds and adaptations were accepted in America was a source of irritation to purists both here and in England. The words *influential*, *lengthy*, *to locate*, *to advocate*, *to jeopardize*, *to progress*, were once attacked as evidence of the corruption of the language. William Cullen Bryant, the poet, went to great lengths to revile as barbarous words like *standpoint*, *bogus*, and *reliable*, including them in a long list which he compiled in about 1870. A British publication poured its scorn on *presidential* and *congressional*. But all these words have found acceptance in the language, and now are even used freely by most Englishmen.

LIST OF COMPOUNDS AND ADAPTATIONS

- abolitionize.** To make averse to Negro slavery. While the word *abolition* generally means "the doing away with," in the years preceding the Civil War it took on an almost exclusive association with Negro slavery.
- all-fired.** Colloquial adverb or adjective meaning "extreme, excessive." Probably a Puritanical corruption of "hell-fired."
- ambulance-chaser.** A slang expression for a lawyer who incites persons to sue for damages because of an accident.
- American plan.** System of charging an inclusive price for room and board in a hotel, in contrast to the *European plan*. Webster's *New International Dictionary* lists over 200 compounds with *American*.

- anxious-bench.** Or *anxious-seat*. A seat near the preacher in an evangelistic service for persons anxious about their spiritual condition.
- backfire.** A fire built to check a prairie fire by depriving it of fuel. Also, a premature explosion in an engine cylinder. Extended, as a verb, to mean "to go counter to a plan."
- back-number.** An earlier number or copy of a periodical or newspaper. Figuratively, a person or thing antiquated or out of date.
- back pay.** Payment for past time or services.
- back-talk.** Saucy or impudent reply or retort.
- bedrock.** In mining, a solid rock underlying loose beds or strata. Figuratively, a fundamental or essential part.
- belittle.** To reduce in size; to speak slightly or disparagingly of.
- bellboy.** A boy or man who answers the bell at the desk of a hotel; a porter. Also *bellhop*.
- billboard.** A board to which notices or posters are affixed.
- blue Monday.** A colloquial expression for a Monday regarded as depressing, especially in contrast to the week-end.
- bogus.** A word of obscure origin, perhaps related to *bogy* (a variant of *bugge*, terror). A noun meaning "an apparatus for coining false money." An adjective meaning "spurious, counterfeit."
- bootlegger.** A slang term for an illicit dealer in liquor. Originally, one who carried liquor in the leg of his tall boot.
- bottom-dollar.** The last dollar in one's possession. Frequently in the expression *bet one's bottom-dollar*.
- bowie knife.** A heavy sheath-knife, about ten to fifteen inches long, named for Col. James Bowie, who was killed at the Alamo in 1836.
- box canyon.** A canyon having a comparatively flat bottom and vertical sides.
- buffalo.** The North American bison. As a verb it means "to bewilder or overawe."

- bulldoze.** A colloquial term meaning "to intimidate by violence or threats." Believed to have been used originally to refer to the intimidation of Negro voters in Louisiana.
- canuck.** In the United States a colloquial expression for a Canadian; in Canada it refers to a French-Canadian.
- carpetbagger.** A contemptuous term for a Northerner who went South to profit by the upheaval following the Civil War, so named for the carpetbags such persons carried. Originally, a wildcat-banker.
- cartoon.** Verb meaning "to portray or caricature in a sketch." Sometimes incorrectly used in place of *carton*.
- casket.** A euphemism for a coffin (1863). Called a "vile modern phrase" by Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- catfish.** Any of a number of freshwater fishes of North America that have a fancied resemblance to a cat.
- cat nap.** A short nap or doze while sitting up.
- cliff-dweller.** In the Southwest, an Indian of a tribe that lived in caves or upon ledges in canyon walls. Sometimes used by extension to refer to city people who live in large apartment houses.
- cloudburst.** A violent and heavy fall of rain.
- coast.** To glide down a snow-covered slope on a sled. By extension, to proceed through momentum.
- come-uppance.** One's just deserts, as in *to get one's come-uppance*.
- conniption fit.** Colloquial for a seizure of hysteria, a tantrum.
- copperhead.** A poisonous snake. Figuratively, a Northern sympathizer with the South during the Civil War.
- county seat.** Town in which the administrative offices and buildings of a county are located.
- crazybone.** The funny bone.
- dark horse.** Figuratively, a political candidate who enters a contest unexpectedly.

dead broke. A colloquial expression meaning "bankrupt, completely without money." *Dead* is used in the sense of completely also in *dead set* and *dead gone*.

dime museum. A freak show charging ten cents admission (1883).

dime novel. A ten-cent novel, usually trashy or ephemeral; cheap sensational literature in general (1865). Compare British *penny dreadful*, *shilling shocker*.

down east. Colloquial for the northeastern part of the U.S., especially Maine.

down south. Colloquial for the Southern states.

downtown. The main business section of a town or city.

elbow room. Space in which to move about easily (1776).

European plan. System in hotels of charging separately for lodging and for meals.

excelsior. Fine shavings of wood used as packing material (1869).

fiat money. Paper currency which is made legal tender by law and is not based on specie.

firebug. Colloquial for an incendiary or pyromaniac.

firecracker. A paper cylinder containing an explosive and a fuse. The British call it a *squib*.

firewater. Jocular for "ardent spirits." Supposedly a translation of the Indian term for whisky (1817).

fish story. Colloquial for an exaggerated or incredible tale. Two origins are suggested. First, from the improbable tales told concerning the denizens of the sea. Second, from the tales of returning fishermen who exaggerate the size of "the one that got away."

foot-warmer. A foot-stove or other device for keeping the feet warm.

four hundred. A name applied to the exclusive social set of a community. Supposedly originated in 1889 by a social leader who stated that only that number of persons were "in society."

- gag rule.** In a deliberative body, a rule that prevents or restricts discussion.
- goatee.** Chin whiskers trimmed in the form of a tuft.
- go-to-meeting.** Colloquial adjective for "church-going"; by extension, "suitable for use on Sundays."
- grandstand-play.** Something done for applause or for spectacular effect. Derived from baseball.
- graveyard.** A cemetery or burial ground (1773).
- gubernatorial.** Pertaining to the governor (1734).
- gumshoe.** Originally, a shoe made of rubber; later, colloquial for a detective.
- half-breed.** The offspring of a white father and an Indian mother; a half-blood.
- hand organ.** A portable organ played mechanically by turning a crank with the hand.
- harmonica.** A musical instrument invented by Benjamin Franklin (not the modern mouth-organ).
- hideout.** A hiding-place. Other noun compounds with *out* are *hand-out*, *dugout*, *black out*, *knockout*, *lookout*, *put-out*.
- highbinder.** Originally, one of a street gang in New York; a ruffian or rowdy (1806).
- hook-and-ladder company.** A fire-company provided with carriages containing ladders and large hooked instruments for tearing down walls.
- hook, line, and sinker.** Completely, without reservation. Undoubtedly derived from angling.
- hydrant.** A street fixture for drawing water from a city main (1806).
- inaugural address.** The speech made by a president of the United States or the governor of a state at his inauguration (1805).
- Indian giver.** One who, like many Indians, makes a present with the expectation of a reciprocal gift or of its return.

- Indian sign.** Track or other indication of the presence of Indians. *To put the Indian sign on a person* has come to mean to put a curse or hex on him.
- Indian summer.** A period of warm weather in October or November after the first frosts. The origin of this term is still a matter of dispute.
- item.** A brief article in a newspaper (1848).
- jackknife.** A large pocket clasp-knife. Used also as a verb to mean "double up, like the folding blades of a jackknife."
- jibe.** Verb meaning "to fit in, to agree with, to be in accord."
- jig saw.** Also *gig saw*. A thin saw for cutting scrolls, frets, and the like, so named because its up-and-down motion is reminiscent of the dance.
- lobbyist.** One who frequents the lobby of a legislative chamber in order to influence action.
- logrolling.** An occasion when a group of people assisted a neighbor in rolling together logs that hindered farming activities and burned them. By extension, in politics, the term came to mean an exchange of assistance by members of a political body.
- lumber.** In British and in early American usage, *lumber* means useless odds and ends such as disused furniture. The British use the term *lumber room* for what the American calls the *attic*. After 1662, *lumber* in America came to mean various pieces of wood, boards, and the like, or growing timber.
- lynch law.** Punishment without due process of law, especially hanging by mob action. Named for Captain William Lynch of Virginia and South Carolina.
- mass meeting.** A gathering of a large number of people for some specified purpose.
- mill.** From the Latin *millesimum*, one-one thousandth part. In American usage, a *mill* is one-tenth of a cent (1791).
- minute-man.** An armed citizen during the Revolutionary War; one available for action at a minute's notice.

- moonshine whisky.** Whisky illegally made by individuals, often in remote communities. It is believed that the name derives from the fact that it was made at night (1875).
- mourner's bench.** At a revival or camp meeting, a front seat reserved for mourners or repentant sinners.
- mouth organ.** A small reed instrument played by mouth.
- necktie party.** Slang for a lynching or hanging.
- nickel.** Coin made in part of that metal, worth five cents.
- nip and tuck.** With rapid alternation of favorable and unfavorable positions.
- one-horse.** A term of disparagement, as in *one-horse town*. Small, petty, unimportant, second-rate.
- outfit.** The supply of necessities for an undertaking; the persons engaged in an undertaking.
- paleface.** Term for white person employed by the Indians or in imitation of them.
- patent leather.** Leather with a smooth, glossy hard surface.
- patrolman.** In early use, a soldier; later, a policeman, life-guard, etc.
- patrol wagon.** A police wagon used to carry prisoners or a squad of policemen.
- phonograph.** An instrument patented by Thomas A. Edison in 1877 for reproducing sounds mechanically.
- piker.** Slang for a penurious person, one who does things in a small way.
- poker.** A card game. Various kinds exist: draw, straight, stud, twenty-deck. Possibly derived from German *pochspiel*.
- pool.** Pocket billiards; a common store, as a *stenographers' pool*; sometimes short for a *swimming pool*.
- prickly heat.** A cutaneous eruption.
- quarter.** A coin worth twenty-five cents.
- ragtime.** Syncopated music, as in some Negro or Negroid melodies.

rambunctious. Adjective meaning "wild, violent, reckless, rampageous." One of the exaggerated coinages which at one time included *explaterate* (to talk at length), *ripstaver* (a person of consequence), *clamjamphrie* (rubbish), *lallapalooza* (something of consequence). Most of these have dropped out of the language.

redskin. An American Indian.

rile. To anger or vex considerably.

rough-and-tumble. Savage, without rules.

roughneck. Slang for rowdy.

rowdy. Noun of obscure origin. A lawless backwoodsman; a rough quarrelsome person.

Sam Hill. The devil; hell. Often used in the expression *What the Sam Hill!*

shebang. House, shop, establishment. Possibly a corruption of *shebeen*, an Irish or Scotch word signifying an ale-house and a place of shady reputation. Used in the expression *the whole shebang*.

shooting iron. A firearm.

shyster. Usually means *shyster lawyer*, a lawyer in the lower criminal courts who preys upon his clients and conducts his business in an unprofessional way.

skyscraper. A tall building.

skulduggery. Also *sculduggery*, *sculduddery*. Tricky, rascally conduct.

slavedriver. One employed to have charge of slaves or to superintend their work. By extension, any cruel or inconsiderate taskmaster.

sleuth. A detective. Name derived from the title of a magazine story which appeared in 1872.

slingshot. A boy's catapult.

slumgullion. Slang for an unpalatable drink.

snake dance. An Indian religious dance, especially among the Hopi tribes.

- sockdolager.** A corruption of *doxology*. A tremendous blow; an unusually large or exceptional person or thing.
- spellbinder.** A political orator.
- spitball.** Paper chewed and made into a missile.
- spit curl.** Colloquial for a small lock of hair dampened and curled to lie flat on the forehead.
- stamping ground.** A favorite haunt (1786).
- stovepipe hat.** A tall, cylindrical silk hat, the crown of which resembles a stove pipe.
- stove wood.** Wood suitable for use in a stove.
- straddle.** To take a noncommittal position on a political or other question (1884).
- sundae.** Or *Sunday*. A dish of ice cream prepared in a special manner (1904).
- thunderhead.** A massive round cloud with bright white edges.
- tintype.** A photographic positive taken on a thin iron plate. Used in the colloquial phrase *not on your tintype*, which means "by no means."
- town meeting.** A formal assembly of the voters in a town for the transaction of public business (1636).
- typewriter.** A machine for writing by means of type characters.
- vim.** Latin for "strength." Force, energy, dash.
- walking papers.** Colloquial for notice of dismissal (1825).
- wishbone.** The V-shaped bone in front of the breastbone in a fowl, so named from the custom of pulling the ends apart after making a wish, the person getting the larger piece supposedly having his wish come true.

WORDS FROM OTHER LANGUAGES

The influence of other European settlers upon the American language has, on the whole, been surprisingly small. In part this may perhaps be explained by the fact that English-speaking per-

sons usually expected others to speak English and not some "foreign lingo." In certain parts of the nation, one European language or another came to be spoken in pure or modified form by large groups of settlers and inevitably made extensive contributions to the American language in that locality. To the Dutch of the New York area may be traced a number of useful and interesting words, as we shall show, but we must remember that hundreds more must have been in use for a time and ultimately perished. In the Pennsylvania-Dutch region, German settlers created an idiom which is still distinctive and which not only added words like *sauerkraut* and *noodle* to the vocabulary but even affected the phrasing of English sentences. The majority of German loan-words, however, seem to have found their way into the language in more recent times and in widely scattered areas.

Certain French borrowings like *butte*, *cache*, and *portage* suggest that they were introduced fairly early by the French explorers of the Northwest, whereas *lagniappe* and *picayune* are probably contributions of the French of the New Orleans region. In the American Southwest today, Americans use dozens of Spanish terms in their everyday speech and the majority of the terms that have found their way into the general vocabulary may be traced to the Spanish of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

These are the major European languages that made any appreciable contribution to our American language. Others have contributed many words to certain localities without making much impression upon the vocabulary of General American. In New York City such terms as *matzoth*, *gefuellte-fish*, and *kosher* from Yiddish need no explanation to the average citizen. Wherever there are Italian restaurants, names like *chianti*, *ravioli*, and *minestrone* are known, and *spaghetti* has, of course, entered the general vocabulary. Likewise, few persons need to be told of the Chinese origin of *chop suey* and *chow mein*. The verbs *to yen* and *to flop* have also been traced to Chinese, as have *kowtow*, *tong*, and *joss*. We consider here words from Dutch, French, Spanish, German, and Indian dialects.

WORDS FROM DUTCH

- bakery.** Dutch *bakkerij*. A bakehouse or baker's shop (1827).
- bedspread.** Dutch *beddesprei*. A coverlet or counterpane (1845).
- boss (n.).** Dutch *baas*, master, foreman. Employer or foreman; one in charge of men at work (1818).
- boss (v.).** To manage, control, direct (1856).
- bum.** Probably from Dutch. Slang term for a loafer, tramp, vagrant (1887). A colloquial adjective meaning "of inferior quality" (1888). A slang verb meaning "to obtain by begging" (1896).
- caboose.** French *cambuse* from Dutch *kombuis*. A cooking range on the deck of a merchant ship (1747). The caboose car: a car having a stove in it, attached to a freight train (1862).
- cole slaw.** An adaptation of the Dutch *koolsla*, cabbage salad (1794). Often written *cold slaw*.
- cookie.** From the Dutch *koekje*, a small cake (1786).
- cruller.** Dutch *krullen*, to curl. A sweet cake fried in deep fat (1805).
- dope.** Dutch *doop*, sauce. A slang term of many meanings: a harmful drug (1872); opium (1895); a thick lubricant (1876); "stuff"; information, knowledge, especially of a kind not easily available. *To dope out*, a slang term meaning "to figure out" (1906).
- filibuster.** Spanish *filibustero* from the Dutch *vrijbuiter* (free + booty). The word *filibuster* was formerly used to describe the making of raids to secure slaves. The word *freebooter*, from the same Dutch source, came to mean "pirate." In a legislative assembly, the term *filibuster* came into use to describe what the British call *obstruction*: the employment of dilatory tactics to impede action by the majority.

- hook.** A sharp bend in the course of a river or channel (1670).
- loafer.** Earlier *land loafer*, landlubber. An idler. The origin of this word is obscure.
- patroon.** Proprietor of one of the manors granted by the old Dutch governments of New York and New Jersey (1774).
- pit.** The hard stone or seed of a fruit (1848).
- Santa Claus.** Dutch *sinterklaas*, corruption of *Sant Nikolaas*, St. Nicholas, patron saint of virgins and children (1823).
- scow.** A large, flat-bottomed boat usually serving as a ferry-boat or lighter (1669).
- sleigh.** Dutch *slee*, a contraction of *slede*. A sled, usually a light vehicle for people (1703).
- snoop.** To pry into; to loiter stealthily (1832).
- span.** A pair of horses, mules, or donkeys (1769).
- spook.** A ghost or specter (1801).
- stoop.** Formerly a small porch with seats or benches; now any small porch, veranda, or entrance stairway at a house door (1755).
- waffle.** A cake somewhat like a pancake (1817).

WORDS FROM FRENCH

- bateau.** The word in French means simply "boat," but as taken over into English it refers to a light flat-bottomed boat for use on rivers (1711).
- bayou.** An American-French adaptation of Choctaw *bayuk*. A stream or channel of water having little observable current; often an inlet (1719).
- buccaneer.** From a French term originally applied to the hunters of Santo Domingo and West Indies. A pirate frequenting the West Indies or the coasts of Spanish America (1764).
- bureau.** French "writing-desk" named for its baize covering. Article of furniture; chest of drawers (1751). Subdi-

vision of the Federal government (1831). An office for the transaction of public or other business.

butte. French for "hillock or mound." In the West, a conspicuous or isolated hill or mountain (1805).

cache. French for "hiding place." A place of hiding or deposit for provisions or other articles; the store so concealed (1805).

calaboose. Louisianian French from the Spanish *calabozo*, dungeon. A prison or lock-up. A jocular term (1792).

calumet. A Norman French term applied by the Canadian French to certain plants and to the Indian pipe. The ceremonial pipe of the North American Indians (1705).

carry-all. A popular alteration of *cariole* from the French *carriole*. Originally a light vehicle or carriage, but later a large heavy carriage as well (1714).

cent. First mentioned in 1782 in a letter from Robert Morris to the U.S. Congress. A coin partially or entirely of copper valued at $\frac{1}{100}$ of a dollar. French from Latin *centum*, hundred.

chambray. From Cambrai, France. A kind of gingham (1814).

chowder. From French *chaudière*, kettle, pot. A stew or thick soup composed of fish or clams, onions, potatoes, crackers, and milk (1751).

chute. French for "fall of water." A fall or rapid in a river; a narrow channel (1806). An inclined plane or trough (1872). British usage prefers *shoot*. Used in the expression *to shoot the chutes*.

coulee. French for "flow." The dry bed of a stream or ravine having sloping sides (1807). Often corrupted to *coolly*.

creole. French from Spanish. A person of French extraction, born in some part of the U.S., especially a native of Louisiana or New Orleans (1742).

crevasse. Old French for "crevice." In the U.S., a break in a levee along the lower Mississippi (1814).

- depot.** In the U.S., a railroad station (1832). In military usage, a storage place for supplies.
- dime.** Silver coin worth ten cents (1786).
- gopher.** Probably from French *gaufre*, honeycomb. The burrowing land-tortoise (1791). A rodent of the ground squirrel subfamily, for example, the prairie dog or chipmunk (1814).
- levee.** From the French "to raise." Embankment for protection from an overflowing river (1766). A landing place or quay (1842).
- mardi gras.** French for "fat Tuesday." Shrove Tuesday, last day of carnival as celebrated in New Orleans (1839); a carnival or festival in imitation of this (1904).
- picayune.** A coin, value about five cents (1805); any slight amount (1835).
- pirogue.** French from Spanish. A dugout; a crude open boat.
- portage.** French for "act of carrying." The carrying of canoes and goods overland from one stretch or body of navigable water to another (1759).
- prairie.** French for "meadow." Level or rolling area destitute of trees, usually covered with grass (1773).
- prairie dog.** Burrowing rodent. Compare *gopher*.
- shanty.** Canadian French *chantier*. A rude hut (1822).
- voyageur.** A French-Canadian or half-breed engaged in transporting people or goods in the Northwest (1809).

WORDS FROM SPANISH

- adobe.** A sun-dried or sun-baked brick (1843).
- alcade, alcalde.** Governor of a fort or castle (1809).
- alfalfa.** Spanish from Arabic. A variety of lucern, much grown in the West for pasture and forage (1855).
- Apache.** Mexican Spanish of uncertain origin. An Indian belonging to a group of warlike and originally nomadic tribes in Arizona and New Mexico (1745). This word

was taken over by the French to refer to certain vicious criminals and then returned to this country as the name of a dance supposedly characteristic of these people.

arroyo. Rivulet, stream, or brook; dry bed of a stream (1843).

avocado. Spanish substitute for the Aztec *ahuacatl*. Fruit of a West Indian tree. See *alligator pear* (1697), page 88.

barbecue. Spanish *barbacoa* of Carib origin, a wooden grid upon which meat is dried or roasted. In American usage, a social gathering at which the chief fare is an animal roasted or broiled in the open air (1702).

bonanza. Spanish for "fair weather; good fortune." Good luck in gold mining (1847).

bronco, broncho. Spanish "rough, rude." In the West, a small wild or half-wild horse or pony (1850).

broncobuster. One who breaks broncos to the saddle (1888).

cafeteria. American Spanish "coffee shop." A restaurant or lunchroom in which patrons serve themselves (1853). The *-eria* suffix, commonly believed to mean "place where," has been used to make many words: *shoeteria*, *healtheteria*, *marketeria*, *smoketeria*.

canyon. Angelicized form of *cañon*, Mexican Spanish for "tube, pipe, conduit." A deep, comparatively narrow gorge or ravine (1834).

chaparral. Spanish "grove of evergreen oaks, thicket." A dense thicket of low thorny shrubs.

chaps, shaps. Colloquial abbreviation of *chaparajos*. Heavy leather leggings (1884).

chili con carne. A Mexican dish containing meat, kidney beans, flavored with chili (red or cayenne peppers) (1895).

cinch. Spanish *cincha*. A strong girth for a saddle often of braided horsehair (1859). Colloquial, "a dead certainty" (1898).

cockroach. Spanish *cucaracha*. An insect pest (1624).

- corral.** Spanish "yard for cattle," from *corro*, "ring." A pen or enclosure (1847).
- coyote.** Mexican Spanish from Nahuatl *coyotl*. The prairie wolf.
- eldorado.** Spanish "the gilded." A place abounding in gold, especially applied to the West or California after 1848 (1827).
- key.** Spanish *cayo*, "shoal, reef." A low island or reef, chiefly off the Florida coast (1772).
- lariat.** Spanish *la reata*, "the rope." A long rope, of rawhide or hemp, used for the lassoing of cattle or horses (1835).
- mesa.** Spanish "table." An elevated tableland.
- mesquite.** Mexican Spanish from Nahuatl *mizquitl*. A species of deep-rooted, shrublike trees found in the Southwest.
- mustang.** Spanish *mestengo*, "wild, having no master." One of the wild horses of the western prairies and the Southwest.
- papaw.** Also *pawpaw*. From the Spanish *papayo*. A North American tree or shrub (1733).
- patio.** Spanish "a court." An inner court or garden open to the sky (1847).
- pickaninny.** Diminutive of Spanish *pequeño*, "a little child." In the United States, a Negro child (1657).
- placer.** A deposit of sand or gravel in which gold occurs in minute particles (1842).
- plaza.** Public square or marketplace (1836).
- pronto.** A colloquial adverb meaning "at once, promptly" (1850).
- pueblo.** In the Southwest, an Indian village of adobe or stone buildings (1818). An Indian belonging to a tribe occupying one of these villages (1834).
- pulque.** Fermented drink from the agave, a tropical plant like the century plant (1796).
- quadroon.** A child of a Spaniard and a mestizo.

- quirt.** Mexican Spanish *cuarta*. Originally, a long whip for striking the lead mule of a four-mule team. A whip, especially a riding-whip with a short handle.
- ranch.** Spanish *ranch*o, properly "a messroom." In the West, an extensive establishment for grazing cattle and sheep (1831). Now used loosely for any kind of large farm.
- rodeo.** Spanish "cattle ring." A round-up of cattle (1851). A public exhibition of features of the round-up (1914).
- serape.** A Mexican blanket worn as an outer garment (1887).
- sombrero.** A broadbrimmed hat worn in the Southwest (1836).
- stampede.** Mexican Spanish *estampida*. A wild headlong rush of animals (1844). Now used for any sudden, unconcerted move of a large number of persons.
- stevedore.** Spanish *estivador*, "packer." A laborer who unloads cargo (1788).
- tamale.** American Spanish from Nahuatl *tamalli*. A highly seasoned article of food made of cornmeal and mince-meat, and usually wrapped in a corn husk (1854).
- tornado.** A Spanish term used in the central U.S. to describe a whirling wind accompanied by a funnel-shaped cloud which moves in a narrow path and frequently does great damage.
- vamoose.** Spanish *vamos*, "let us go." In the Southwest, a colloquial expression meaning "depart." Often in the expression *vamoose the ranch*: to depart, scatter.
- vigilante.** Spanish "alert." Member of a vigilance committee (1867).

WORDS FROM GERMAN

- beer garden.** Literal translation of *Biergarten*. Garden where beer and liquors are sold and served at tables.
- blutwurst.** Blood pudding; black sausage containing a large proportion of blood.

- bock (beer).** German corruption of *einbecker bier*, named for Einbeck, in Germany: a kind of beer brewed in the spring.
- dachshund.** German for badger dog. A short-legged small hound.
- delicatessen.** German from French *delicatesse*. Cooked meats, relishes, preserves, and other prepared foods; the store selling these.
- fest.** A suffix meaning "festival." German words like *sängerfest*, "singing festival," suggested many American hybrids such as *slugfest*, a boxing match, and *gabfest*, a noisy conversation.
- frankfurter.** Also *frankfurt* or *frankforter*. Highly seasoned beef and pork sausage, linked, and smoked, named for the German city of Frankfurt. Served in a long roll, the frankfurter is known as a *hot dog*.
- gesundheit.** Literally, "to your health." A greeting; an exclamation used when someone sneezes.
- hamburger.** Also called *hamburg* or *hamburg steak*. Ground or chopped beef. The suffix *-burger* has been used in many curious words such as *cheeseburger* and *nutburger*.
- hausfrau.** German for housewife.
- katzenjammers.** German for period of depression after a drinking bout or "hangover." Also used to mean "practical jokes" or "horseplay."
- kindergarten.** Literally, "children's garden." A school for children just below primary-school age.
- lager (beer).** German for "storehouse beer," beer laid up or stored several months before use.
- liverwurst.** Partial translation of German *leberwurst*, liver sausage.
- nix.** German *nichts*. Means "No" in slang.
- noodle.** German *nudel*, vermicelli. Ribbon-shaped paste made of egg solids.
- ouch.** German *autsch*. An exclamation indicating sudden pain.

pretzel. Brittle German biscuit, in the form of a twisted ring, salted.

prosit. Literally, "May it do you good" from Latin. Salutation often used by Germans when drinking healths.

pumpernickel. Acid but nourishing bread made from unbolted rye; originally used in Westphalia.

rathskeller. Or *ratskeller*; literally "town-hall cellar." A restaurant, often below street-level, where drinks are served. Beer and wine were sold in the basement of German town-halls.

sauerbraten. German "sour roast." Beef pot-roast, soaked in vinegar before cooking.

sauerkraut. German "sour cabbage." Finely cut cabbage fermented in its own juice with salt.

schnitzel. Veal cutlet.

stein. German "stone." Thick mug, of glass or earthenware, for beer, often holding as much as a quart.

wienerwurst. Also *wiener* or *wienie*. A sausage somewhat smaller and slenderer than a frankfurter, named for Wien (Vienna).

wurst. German "sausage," used as a suffix.

zwieback. German "twice baked." A biscuit or rusk baked in a loaf, cut, and toasted.

WORDS FROM AMERICAN INDIAN DIALECTS

FROM NORTH AMERICAN DIALECTS

Of the various Indian languages in North America from which words have entered the English language, the most significant are the Algonquian, ranging from Hudson Bay to Tennessee, the Iroquoian, including the Five Nations and the Cherokees, and the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest. Among the more important subdivisions of the Algonquian linguistic family may be mentioned the Cree, Ojibway, Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Micmac, Illinois, Miami, Delaware, Massachuset, and Shawnee.

- caribou.** Canadian French from Algonquian. The North American reindeer (1610).
- catalpa.** From the Creek *kutuhlpa*. An American tree, sometimes spelled *catawba*.
- caucus.** Probably from Algonquian *caucauas*, "one who advises, urges." A political meeting to decide on policies or candidates.
- cayuse.** From the name of a tribe now in Oregon. An Indian pony (1869).
- chautauqua.** Indian name of a lake in western New York State. An assembly or organization imitating that established at Lake Chautauqua.
- chipmunk.** Of Algonquian origin. The ground squirrel. Also spelled *chipmuck* (1841).
- 'coon, raccoon.** Algonquian for "he scratches with his hands." A grayish-brown furry animal with bushy tail and sharp snout (1608).
- hickory.** A shortening of Algonquian *pohickery*. An American tree (1675).
- hominy.** Algonquian *rockahominy*. The hulled kernels of Indian corn (1629).
- hooch.** Short for *hoocheno*, Alaskan Indian name for an alcoholic beverage.
- igloo.** Eastern Eskimo for snow house. An Eskimo house or hut, often made of snow blocks.
- kiva.** Hopi for "secret chamber." An assembly chamber for religious rites among the Pueblo Indians (1875).
- mackinaw.** Canadian French *mackinac* from Ojibway *mitch-makinak*, "great turtle." A thick blanket like one of those formerly distributed to the Indians at Mackinac, Michigan (1827). Now used for a short heavy coat, the design and colors of which resemble the blanket.
- manito.** Algonquian deity or spirit (1671).

- moccasin.** Algonquian. A soft-soled shoe, usually of skin, worn originally by American Indians (1612). The name is also applied to a snake and a flower.
- moose.** Algonquian. A large American forest-dwelling mammal (1616).
- mugwump.** Algonquian for "a chief." An important person; used ironically (1884).
- muskellunge.** Ojibway *mashkinoje*, "great pike." A large pike of the Great Lakes (1794).
- opossum.** Algonquian. An American marsupial about the size of a house cat (1610). Commonly called a *possum*. *To play possum* means "to feign," from the animal's habit of feigning death when attacked.
- papoose.** Algonquian for "suckling." An Indian baby or young child (1634).
- pecan.** Algonquian for "any hard-shelled nut." A species of hickory and the richly flavored nut of this tree (1778).
- pemmican.** Cree *pimikkan*. Among the Indians and the frontiersmen, a form of prepared meat, buffalo flesh or venison (1804).
- persimmon.** Algonquian. The edible, plum-like fruit of an American tree (1612).
- pone.** Algonquian. Short for *corn pone*: bread made of Indian corn meal, water or milk, and salt (1612).
- potlatch.** Chinook *patshatl*, "a gift." Among the Indians on the Northwest coast, a gift or present, as of trinkets, blankets, household goods.
- powwow.** Probably Narraganset *powâw*. Council or conference of Indians (1647). Colloquially, a meeting that is noisy and long-winded, at which little or no business is done (1812).
- punk.** Algonquian for "fine ashes, powder." Partially decayed wood used as tinder (1705). The idea of decay in this word is carried over into its slang meaning of "bad, inferior."

- quahog.** Algonquian. The hard or round clam (1799). Also spelled *quahaug*, *quohaug*.
- sachem.** Algonquian. A chief of an Indian tribe (1622). A political leader (1684).
- skunk.** Algonquian. A weasel-like mammal (1634). Slang for a contemptible, untrustworthy person.
- squash.** Algonquian. An American gourd (1643).
- squaw.** Algonquian. An Indian woman or wife (1634).
- stogie, stogy.** From Conestoga, Penna., named for a local tribe of Iroquoian Indians. A heavy rough shoe or boot (1847). An inexpensive cigar, usually long and slender (1893).
- succotash.** Narraganset *misickquatash*, "ear of corn." A dish of corn and beans boiled together with or without meat (1751).
- tepee.** Dakota *tipi*. An Indian lodge or wigwam (1835).
- terrapin.** Algonquian. An edible turtle, land or freshwater (1672).
- toboggan.** Canadian French from Algonquian. A light narrow sled used for transportation or for coasting over snow (1884).
- tomahawk.** Algonquian. Club or hatchet-like weapon, used by the Algonquian Indians (1612).
- totem.** Among the Indians, something associated with or identifying a specific group of persons; for example, a species of animal or plant (1791).
- tuckahoe.** Algonquian. A vegetable food used by the Indians (1612). Also a place name—*Tuckahoe*, N.Y.
- tuxedo.** A tail-less dinner jacket for men. From *Tuxedo* Park, N.Y., a fashionable resort. *Tuxedo* is from an Indian word meaning "place of the bears."
- wahoo.** Creek *uhawhu*. Name of a tree or shrub (1802).
- wampum.** Narraganset *wampompeag*. Shellbeads used by the Indians as ornaments and medium of exchange in early colonial trade (1627).

wickiup. Algonquian. A brush hut or mat-covered house used by the Indians in the West (1857). Now any rude shelter.

woodchuck. Modification of Algonquian *wejack*. The marmot or ground hog (1674).

FROM CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN DIALECTS

The Indians of North America were not the only American aborigines who contributed words to the language. Words like *potato*, *tobacco*, and *cannibal* entered the English language soon after the earliest voyages of discovery, when contact had been made with Indians in other regions of the New World. Many of these words can be traced to various Indian dialects in the West Indies and Central and South America; to Taino, the language of the Bahamas and the Greater Antilles; to Tupian in the Amazon region of Brazil; to Nahuatl, a language group including the Aztec. A number of the earliest terms reached the English language by way of Portuguese during the sixteenth century.

alligator. From the Spanish *el lagarto de Indias*, the cayman or American crocodile (1568).

alligator pear. The avocado; pulpy, green or purple fruit of a tropical American tree.

bison. From the French: an ox-like quadruped that was once plentiful on the Western plains (1774).

buffalo. From the Portuguese or Italian *buffalo*, a kind of African stag or gazelle; also the wild ox. The American bison (1789).

cannibal. From the Spanish *canibal*, *caribal*, from the Carib. A human being who eats human flesh (1553).

canoe. Spanish from Haitian *canoa*. A boat made of a hollowed tree trunk or consisting of a framework covered with hide or bark. Now, a small light boat or skiff propelled by paddling (1799).

chocolate. Spanish from Nahuatl *chocólatl* (1604).

- coca.** Spanish from Peruvian dialect *coca*, *cuca* (1616). *Cocaine*, drug from coca producing local insensibility (1874).
- cougar.** From native name in Tupi (South American). Also called *puma*, *catamount*, *mountain lion* (1774).
- dory.** From Central American Indian *dóri*, "dugout." Small flat-bottomed boat having wide flaring sides, noted for its stability (1709).
- flamingo.** From Portuguese *flamingo* or Spanish *flamenco*. A bird with bright scarlet plumage (1565).
- gaucho.** Cowboy of the pampas, of mixed Spanish and Indian descent.
- hammock.** Spanish from Carib. A swinging couch, customarily used by sailors on shipboard (1555).
- jaguar.** Spanish and Portuguese from Tupian. A large powerful cat ranging from Texas to Paraguay (1604).
- maize.** Spanish *maiz* from Cuban dialect word *maisi* adaptation of Arawak (Guiana) and Carib names. The Indian corn (1565).
- molasses.** Portuguese *melaço* from Latin *mellaceus*, honey-like. Syrup from raw sugar (1570).
- petunia.** Modern Latin from French *petun*, "tobacco," from Portuguese from Tupi *putúma*. A tropical American herb of the nightshade family.
- potato.** Spanish *patata*, originally "sweet potato"; a variant of *batata* from Taino (1565).
- sarsaparilla.** Spanish *zarzaparrilla* from *zarza*, "bramble." A kind of tropical American smilax (1577).
- sassafras.** Spanish *sasafrás*, apparently from confusion with *saxafrax*, "saxifrage." A small tree, native to North America (1577).
- savannah.** Spanish *zavana* from Taino. A treeless plain; an open, level region, especially in Florida (1555).

- tapioca.** Portuguese from Tupi and Guarani (Brazil) *tipioca*, juice of cassava. A granular preparation of cassava starch (1707).
- tobacco.** Spanish *tabaco* from Taino *tabaco*, a cigar-like roll of tobacco leaves, a Y-shaped pipe with which the Indians of the Antilles inhaled smoke through the nostrils (1577).
- tomato.** Spanish from Nahuatl *tomatl*. Glossy fruit of a native American plant (1604).
- veranda.** From Portuguese *varanda*, which was an earlier borrowing from Anglo-Indian. An open gallery or portico usually roofed, attached to the exterior of a building. In the United States often called a *porch* or *piazza* (1711).
- yam.** Portuguese *inhame* from Senegal (Guinea) *nyami*, "to eat." In southern U.S., the sweet potato (1588).

Place Names in America

THE subject of American place names is vast, complicated, and fascinating. Probably the names of the cities, towns, rivers, and mountains of no other country are so varied in origin and so diverse in character. Consequently, tracing the names back to their source is often a hazardous process. In addition, the natural tendency to cloak some of the names in more glamor than the original namers ever intended to bestow has made difficult a true evaluation of many of the names. For many years, for example, it was believed that nothing less than the poetical "father of waters" would serve as a translation of *Mississippi*; it must have come as a disappointment to many then to learn that the Indian originators of the name meant merely "the big river." However, despite these and other difficulties, it is possible to discuss the question of American place names more or less systematically.

Place names in America may be conveniently arranged in a few large groups:

(1) *Names of persons, groups of persons, or notable events in some way associated with a locality, including Indian names.* Thus Binghamton and Rochester, N.Y., were named for individuals; Red Jacket, N.Y., was named for an Indian chief who wore a British red coat; Voluntown, Conn., was so named because most of the town was granted to volunteers during the Narragansett War; and Tin Cup, Colo., is said to have derived its name from the fact that gold was so plentiful at one time that it was measured in a tin cup.

(2) *Names descriptive of physical conditions or natural attributes.* Split Rock, Cherry Valley, Oyster Bay, White Plains,

Buffalo, Bull Run, Long Island, Elk Park, and Cornville are examples.

(3) *Names for other parts of the world.* These include Danbury, Conn., from Danbury in the county of Essex, England; Brazil, Ind., from the South American country; and Jerusalem, N.Y., for the city in Palestine.

(4) *Names for local industries or institutions.* These include Valley Forge, Pa.; Linoleumville, N.Y.; and Gloversville, N.Y.

(5) *Names that are corruptions of older names or are merely fanciful.* Some names of this type are Wellfleet, Mass., a corruption of "whale fleet"; and Penn Yan, N.Y., derived from the names of the early settlers, who were *Pennsylvanians* and *Yankees*.

Convenient as these categories are, it is dangerous to jump to conclusions about the origin of a place name. The case of *Mansfield* is a good illustration of this:

Mansfield, Conn., named for Moses Mansfield, mayor of New Haven, Conn.

Mansfield, Mass., named for William Murray, Earl of Mansfield.

Mansfield, Ohio, named for Col. Jared Mansfield, U.S. Surveyor-General.

Mansfield, Pa., named for Asa Mansfield, original owner of the land.

Likewise, many places bear the name *Adams*, but they are not of the same origin. John Adams, second president of the United States has given his name to places in Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, and Washington, and to Adamsburgh and Adamstown, Pa. The sixth president, John Quincy Adams, has given his name to a mountain in New Hampshire and to counties in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. But Adams, Mass., is named for Samuel Adams, and Adams, Neb., Adams, Tenn., and Adamsboro, Ind., derive their names from early settlers.

THE BEGINNINGS OF AMERICAN PLACE NAMES

In this discussion of early American place names we consider first the rather extensive influence of the American Indians in naming places, and then examine the names applied to places by the various groups of early settlers in the New World.

THE INDIAN HERITAGE IN PLACE NAMES

No one will question the fact that it was the Indian who did most to give the nomenclature of the American continent its characteristic tone. Names inherited from the red man are found everywhere, and they include our great rivers, the Eastern mountain ranges, all but one of the Great Lakes, many famous cities, and most of the names of the states themselves.

From Mooselookmeguntic to Tallahassee and from Tippecanoe to Walla Walla, the country is rich in Indian names. When they were first bestowed, the Indian was, as a rule, a grim reality and too often a menace. The romantic attitude towards Indian names was a late development. Oddly enough, some names came to be considered euphonious and charming whereas others have always seemed simply funny. The names *Monongahela*, *Rappahannock*, *Shenandoah*, and *Susquehanna* are not essentially different from *Oshkosh*, *Hohokus*, *Keokuk*, and *Kalamazoo*, yet these latter cities have become America's "joke-towns." The name *Podunk* has become a jocular symbol for any small and unimportant place. It has been explained that the word in an Algonquian dialect means "a boggy place" or "a marsh." There are Podunks in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and elsewhere. But it probably would not have attained its present high rank as a humorous name had it not been for a series of "Letters from Podunk" which appeared in a Buffalo, N.Y., newspaper in 1846.

Only two of the original thirteen colonies had Indian names—Massachusetts and Connecticut. But, taking the forty-eight states, the names are predominantly Indian, as the following will show:

Alabama. French *Alibamons* from the Indian word for "thicket-clearers."

- Arizona.** Spanish from Papago Indian for "little spring."
- Arkansas.** Algonquian name of an Indian tribe.
- California.** Name of an imaginary island mentioned in a sixteenth-century romance, given to the western region by the Spanish conquistadors.
- Colorado.** Spanish for "red."
- Connecticut.** Indian for "long river" or "estuary."
- Delaware.** For Lord de la Ware, Governor of Virginia in 1610.
- Florida.** Spanish *Pascua Florida*, "Feast of Flowers" or Easter, given by Ponce de Leon.
- Georgia.** For George II of England.
- Idaho.** Comanche Indian *ee-dah-how*, a greeting.
- Illinois.** French form of the Indian *illini*, "men."
- Indiana.** Latinized form meaning "Indian land."
- Iowa.** French contraction and distortion of Sioux *ouaouiatonon*, "tribe."
- Kansas.** Name of an Indian tribe of the Sioux family.
- Kentucky.** Iroquois *kenta-ke*, "meadows."
- Louisiana.** Named by La Salle in 1682 for Louis XIV.
- Maine.** For the province of Maine in France, owned by Charles I's queen, Henrietta Maria; or, more probably, because it was referred to by sailors as "the main" or mainland.
- Maryland.** For Queen Henrietta Maria.
- Massachusetts.** Indian word meaning "big-hill people."
- Michigan.** Indian word meaning "big lake."
- Minnesota.** Indian word meaning "muddy or cloudy water."
- Mississippi.** Indian word meaning "big river."
- Missouri.** Indian tribal name, possibly meaning "big canoes."
- Montana.** Spanish for "mountainous."

Nebraska. Omaha Indian word meaning "spreading or wide river."

Nevada. Spanish for "snow-covered."

New Hampshire. For the English county Hampshire, named by Captain John Mason, 1629.

New Jersey. For the Island of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands.

New Mexico. *Mexico* is from the Aztec *mexitli*, "war god."

New York. For James, Duke of York.

North Carolina. For Charles I of England.

North Dakota. Sioux word meaning "alliance of friends."

Ohio. Indian word meaning "fine river."

Oklahoma. Choctaw word meaning "red people."

Oregon. The origin is disputed. It is probably from a mistake in spelling the river name *Ouisconsink* (compare *Wisconsin*) as *Ouaricon*.

Pennsylvania. Name given on Penn's charter (against his own wishes) by Charles II. It means "Penn's woods."

Rhode Island. Name adopted by the General Court of the Providence Plantations in 1664, after the island in the Mediterranean.

South Carolina. See *North Carolina*.

South Dakota. See *North Dakota*.

Tennessee. Named for an Indian town. Formerly the State of Franklin.

Texas. Indian word meaning "friends."

Utah. For the Ute Indians; replaced the earlier *Deseret*, a name given by the Mormons from the Book of Mormon.

Vermont. Possibly derived from the French *Les Monts Verts*, "green mountains."

Virginia. For Queen Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen.

Washington. For George Washington.

West Virginia. See *Virginia*.

Wisconsin. Indian word for "river" spelled by the French *Ouisconsink*.

Wyoming. Delaware Indian word for "at the big flats," used to name a valley in Pennsylvania. It was made popular by the poem *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), and eventually applied to the Western territory.

Many of the following names of cities, all of Indian origin, have become known all over the world:

Allegheny	Manhattan	Pensacola
Cayuga	Minneapolis	Pontiac
Chautauqua	Mobile	Schenectady
Cheyenne	Muncie	Seattle
Chicago	Muskegon	Tacoma
Erie	Niagara	Tallahassee
Hackensack	Omaha	Topeka
Kalamazoo	Osceola	Wichita
Keokuk	Oshkosh	

The highway departments in the various states have contributed much to our enjoyment of Indian names by putting up signs and markers giving the names of villages and streams, often with some indication of the origin. But it was found almost impossible to keep souvenir-hunters from appropriating the sign put up for a small stream near New Milford, Connecticut, for the name of the stream was *Naromiyocknowhusatankshunk*.

THE EARLIEST COLONIAL NAMES

The attitude towards names and naming appears to vary from nation to nation. The early Spanish and Portuguese explorers as a whole seemed inclined to name an island or a river after the saint upon whose day it was discovered. Of the English by and large it may be said that they regarded names as merely names. They had forgotten, if any of them ever knew, the original sig-

nificance of the local names of England which they transported in such great numbers to the New World. Settlements, rivers, hills, bays, inlets all needed names. Sometimes they wrote on their maps, as well as they could, the Indian names they heard being used. Sometimes they used a translation of the native name. More often than not, however, they bestowed names of their own choosing.

When the Pilgrims landed in 1620, there were already a number of names on the eastern coast of the American continent. Far to the south there was Spanish Florida, named by Juan Ponce de Leon in honor of the Easter season. North of Florida was the region known as Virginia, named for Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen. Sir Walter Raleigh, in 1584, was given authority to colonize lands in the New World. His attempts to establish a settlement cannot be regarded as successful, but they did give the eastern seaboard a few names that have survived: *Roanoak* (Roanoke), the river names *Chawanook* (Chowan) and *Neus* (Neuse), the capes *Fear* and *Hatrask* (Hatteras), and the name *Chesepiook* (Chesapeake). The last was applied originally to a river. In the Indian language it meant "big river," but it came to be applied to the bay.

With the planting of Jamestown on May 14, 1607, there arose a need for many more names. Captain John Smith and his fellows recorded the results of their explorations along the coast and up the rivers in the reports they drew up and on the maps they made. Smith's *Map of Virginia*, printed at Oxford in 1612, contains an impressive number of names. Many Indian names are recorded here for the first time, among the more lasting of which may be mentioned *Patowomek* (Potomac) and *Sasquesahanock* (Susquehanna). Smith's fellow-explorers showed a fondness for bestowing fanciful names, either rough translations of Indian names or else names such as *Kind Woman's Care* to commemorate an incident. Few of these have survived. Smith, on the other hand, often gave names in honor of his patrons or of other distinguished persons: *Willoughby River*, *Cape Henry*, *Cape Charles*.

PLACE NAMES IN VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

Since the various parts of the United States were settled at different times and by different groups of people, an examination of the names of places in these parts can throw light on the varying influences at work in place-naming. Beginning with names in New England, we take up in turn names in New York and the Middle Atlantic States, the Southern States, and the West.

NAMES IN NEW ENGLAND

Despite the fact that we tend to associate Smith's name with the Virginia plantations, probably because of the romantic Pocahontas episode, he was always, he tells us, attracted to New England. For this reason he offered his services to the Pilgrim Fathers. But the Pilgrims decided, as it happened, that it would be more economical to use the maps which Captain Smith had already published—especially the map of New England—than to engage the famous explorer as a guide.

Smith's map of New England is interesting in a number of ways, for in it he rejected some earlier names for the region, particularly the name *Norumbega*, perpetuated by the poet John Milton, and gave us the name *New England*. Smith learned the word *Massachusetts* as the name of a local Indian tribe and wrote it upon his map. Characteristically enough, he submitted his map to Prince Charles, who made a number of changes and additions to the names Smith had inscribed.

Cape Cod thus became Cape James, Accomack became Plymouth, and Accominticus became Boston. Captain Smith, in memory of the kindness shown him by the sister of Timor, the Pasha of Nalbrits, while he was a slave to the Turks, had placed on his map the exotic name of Cape Trabigzanda. Charles altered it to Cape Ann, in honor of his mother. This name survived, as did Cape Elizabeth further north, and, of course, Plymouth, but we now prefer Cape Cod to Cape James, and the present name for Smith's Isles, off Portsmouth, is Isles of Shoals. Charles's Boston did not survive (he had placed it near the present

Portsmouth, N.H.), for it was not until 1628 that the Massachusetts Bay Settlement under John Endicott and Winthrop established themselves at a place called Shawmut or Trimountaine, and on September 17, 1630, named the new town *Boston* in honor of the Boston in Lincolnshire. *Trimountaine* survives in Tremont Street in the city of Boston.

Thus the Massachusetts Colony gave official sanction to the process begun by Smith and Prince Charles. It grew customary to give an English name to a new settlement whenever it became large enough to warrant a regular name. The following list of places in New England with namesakes in England shows how thoroughly this practice was carried out and shows also that relatively unimportant villages as well as famous English cities were honored in the course of the settling in America:

Andover, Mass.	Dover, N.H.	Lonsdale, R.I.
Attleboro, Mass.	Dunstable, Mass.	Ludlow, Mass.
Barnstable, Mass.	Durham, Conn.	Lyme, Conn.
Bath, Me.	Enfield, N.H.	Maidstone, Vt.
Boothbay, Me.	Epping, N.H.	Malden, Mass.
Boston, Mass.	Epsom, N.H.	Manchester, Mass.
Bradford, Mass.	Exeter, R.I.	Marlow, N.H.
Braintree, Mass.	Falmouth, Me.	Melrose, Mass.
Branford, Conn.	Framingham, Mass.	Mendon, Mass.
Brentwood, N.H.	Glastonbury, Conn.	Milford, N.H.
Bristol, Me.	Gloucester, Mass.	Needham, Mass.
Cambridge, Mass.	Greenwich, Conn.	Norfolk, Mass.
Canterbury, Conn.	Guilford, Conn.	Norwich, Conn.
Chelmsford, Mass.	Hadley, Mass.	Oakham, Mass.
Chelsea, Mass.	Hartford, Conn.	Oxford, Me.
Cheshire, Mass.	Hingham, Mass.	Pembroke, Mass.
Chichester, N.H.	Holderness, N.H.	Plymouth, Mass.
Colchester, Conn.	Hull, Mass.	Pomfret, Conn.
Coventry, R.I.	Ipswich, Mass.	Reading, Conn.
Croydon, N.H.	Islington, Mass.	Rochester, Mass.
Danbury, Conn.	Kensington, N.H.	Rowley, Mass.
Danby, Vt.	Killingworth, Conn.	Rutland, Mass.
Dartmouth, Mass.	Leeds, Mass.	Rye, N.H.
Dedham, Mass.	Leominster, Mass.	Salisbury, Mass.
Derby, Conn.	Lexington, Mass.	Sandwich, Mass.
Dorchester, Mass.	Litchfield, Conn.	Scarboro, Me.

Sheffield, Mass.	Sutton, Mass.	Westminster, Mass.
Sherborn, Mass.	Swansea, Mass.	Weymouth, Mass.
Shirley, Me.	Taunton, Mass.	Wilton, N.H.
Shrewsbury, Mass.	Tewksbury, Mass.	Windham, Conn.
Southampton, Mass.	Tisbury, Mass.	Windsor, Mass.
Springfield, Mass.	Torrington, Conn.	Woburn, Mass.
Stockbridge, Mass.	Truro, Mass.	Woodstock, Conn.,
Strafford, N.H.	Uxbridge, Mass.	Vt., N.H.
Sturbridge, Mass.	Walpole, N.H.	Woolwich, Me.
Sudbury, Mass.	Wareham, Mass.	Worcester, Mass.
Suffolk, Mass.	Wells, Me.	Wrentham, Mass.
Surry, N.H.	Wenham, Mass.	Yarmouth, Mass.

A few of these names are deceptive and one looks in vain in England for their namesakes. Branford, Conn., for example, is the equivalent of Brentford in England; Framingham is a corruption of Framlingham in Suffolk County; Killingworth, Conn., is a variant of the better-known Kenilworth; and Mendon, Mass., is named for Mendham, a name which is preserved exactly in the New Jersey town.

As settlements were established in the western parts of the New England colonies, names were carried from the coastal regions and used further inland. Settlers from Massachusetts established three towns—Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor—in the region they came to call Connecticut, a version of the Indian name of the river Quinetucquet. In general, Indian names were preserved for names of rivers and hills, and, although the Monhegin River became the Thames, the rivers Hammonasset, Quinipiac, Housatonic, Naugatuck, and Saugatuck preserve the old names. Even Norwalk, which sounds English, was originally Norwaak or Naramake.

NAMES IN NEW YORK AND THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES

In the Dutch colony of New Netherlands along the Hudson River some names became firmly established before the English changed New Amsterdam to New York: Breukelyn (Brooklyn), Vlissingen (Flushing), and Haerlem (Harlem). It is interesting to note how the history of New York City is reflected in the cur-

rent names of its parts. Four of the official county names were given by the English: New York, Kings, Queens, and Richmond. But as popularly named, one—Manhattan—shows Indian influence, and two—Brooklyn and Staten Island—Dutch influence. The Bronx is named for Jonas Bronck, a Danish landowner in that area.

After the English conquest, Fort Orange or Beverwyck became Albany (for the Scottish title of the Duke of York), but along the river were countless places named by the Dutch:

Tarrytown. From Dutch *tarwe*, "wheat"

Watervliet. "Flowing stream"

Saugerties. From *Zaeger's kill*, "sawyer's creek"

Rensselaer. For Kilian van Rensselaer

Verplanck. For Philip Verplanck

Yonkers. Dutch "young lord," name of the manorhouse of Adrien Van der Donck.

Many of the county names are survivals of the Dutch period:

Orange
Nassau

Rensselaer
Cortland

Schuyler

And cities and villages as well:

Beekmantown
Blauvelt
Bleecker
Calicoon
Catskill
Claverack
Cuyler
De Reuter
Guilderland

Haverstraw
Heuvelton
Kinderhook
Leyden
Nassau
New Utrecht
Plattekill
Poestenkill

Roseboom
Saugerties
Valatie
Van Etten
Watervliet
Westerlo
Yonkers
Zealand

Farther south, Swedish colonists tried to establish the name *New Sweden* along the Delaware River but were conquered by the Dutch before they could accomplish much.

William Penn's colony was named Pennsylvania (Penn's woods) by Charles II, and in his city of Philadelphia, the American custom of numbered streets began.

NAMES IN THE SOUTHERN STATES

The nation's capital, Washington, D.C., was built on the ancestral lands of Powhatan, father of Pocahontas. In 1790 Congress passed an act permitting the President to establish the capital anywhere along the Potomac between the East Branch and the Conogocheague, and it is recorded that Washington himself surveyed the boundaries and drew up the original agreement whereby the owners of the land conveyed it to the government. The city was planned by Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who had been a major of engineers during the Revolution.

A more ancient capital is Williamsburg, Va., on the peninsula between the James and York rivers. It was founded in 1632 and originally called *Middle Plantation* because of its location. After the burning of the State House at Jamestown in 1698, Middle Plantation was made the seat of government and its name was changed in 1699 to Williamsburg in honor of the king, who was later honored, together with his queen, in William and Mary College.

Raleigh, N.C., was established by decree as "a fixed and unalterable seat of government" in 1787 and named in honor of Sir Walter Raleigh. It is also the county seat of Wake County, said to be named for the wife of William Tryon, English governor of North Carolina and later of New York. The governor was so much disliked that Tryon as a county name was abolished in the Empire State.

Cheraw, S.C., derives its name from an Indian term meaning "fire town." It was settled in 1735 by Welsh immigrants from Pennsylvania, and it was near this town that the term *lynch law* began. Colonel Charles Lynch of Lynchburg, Virginia, had been named Judge Advocate to serve at courts-martial at the nearby camp of General Nathanael Greene. The arbitrary decisions of Lynch added a term to the American vocabulary.

Charleston (earlier Charles Town), S.C., began as Port Royal, a Huguenot settlement, in 1562, but was not effectively free from Spanish oppression until a permanent settlement was made by the English in 1670.

Savannah, a city and river in Georgia, derives its name from the Spanish *savanne*, meaning "grassy plain." The region was settled by James Edward Oglethorpe in 1733 and to Savannah came the great missionaries Wesley and Whitefield. Atlanta, the capital city, was built on lands ceded in 1821 by the Creek Indians. First called Terminus, for its position at the end of the proposed state railroad, it was later called Marthasville in honor of Governor Lumpkin's daughter and finally received the name of Atlanta, probably because of the Western and Atlantic Railroad.

The Spanish occupation of Florida and the South left a number of famous names on the map. The oldest city in the United States is St. Augustine, Fla., founded by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565. The varying fortunes of this city, subjected as it was to border warfare, Indian raids, and pirates, are typical of much of the southern region. Rule passed back and forth between the Spanish and the English. At the Indian village of Caparaca, the mission of Aticuimi was founded by Spanish missionaries in 1696, almost a century before the great California missions were established. In 1761, the region was settled by 1500 colonists, some 1200 of them from the Island of Minorca in the Mediterranean, brought to Florida by Dr. Andrew Turnbull. The settlement received the name of New Smyrna. Tavernier, Fla., which perpetuates the name of the lieutenant of the pirate Jean LaFitte, reminds us of the part played by the buccaneers in Florida's history. One of their haunts was a small coral island, some sixty miles from the southernmost tip of the mainland. Known in the sixteenth century as Cayo Hueso ("bone reef") because of the human bones found there, it is today the best-known of the Florida keys and is called Key West. Tallahassee, Tampa, and Miami are Indian names, and Daytona Beach was named for Mathias Day of Ohio.

NAMES AS THE FRONTIER MOVED WESTWARD

Very early the American colonists began pushing westward, and as a result of this long-term process of expansion, many areas have at one time or another been known as the American frontier. The first regions so designated were western Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania; then the Middle West became the fron-

tier; and finally the South and Far West were known as the frontier. With each move new places were named, and the names applied varied with the character of the new settlers and the nationalities of those who had previously left their mark on the frontier regions.

For a time, it became the fashion to use royal names for new American settlements. During the French and Indian wars many towns were named Georgetown, Kingston, Brunswick (the English version of *Braunschweig*), Hanover, Fredericksburg, and Charlotte in honor of the royal family, or Walpole, Bedford, Halifax, Pelham, and the like for members of the nobility in England. The Revolution changed all this. During the war, a number of names acquired new luster—Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Ticonderoga, Valley Forge—and local leaders were soon to be honored in many parts of the land: Franklin, Hancock, Adams, Wayne, Patrick Henry, and, of course, Washington.

Schenectady, a village near Albany, N.Y., was attacked and burned by French and Indians in 1690. For nearly seventy-five years thereafter warfare was constant on the frontier, but the grip of France upon New York State was broken by 1763. Some names persist as reminders that the French long held two-thirds of the present state; many French place-names are of course of later date. The Marquis de Lafayette, who served in the American army during the Revolution, is remembered in Lafayette, N.Y., as well as in many other counties, towns, and villages in America.

A less famous French nobleman, De Chaumont, expended most of his large fortune in the American cause. His son, James LeRay de Chaumont, came to America in 1785, was reimbursed by the government, and used the money to purchase several thousand acres of land near Lake Ontario, in the present Jefferson and Lewis counties. Thanks to his interest in developing the land, settlers were attracted, including a group of famous refugees from France after the battle of Waterloo. Among them were Napoleon's Marshal Grouchy; his chief of police, Count Pierre François Real; Camille Armand, a painter; General Roland; and a certain Professor Pigeon, who had sworn never to wear a hat so long as Napoleon was imprisoned. It was popularly believed that this group was plotting to rescue Napoleon. Three villages—Chau-

mont, LeRaysville, and Cape Vincent—perpetuate the names of the De Chaumonts.

Lake Bonaparte and Versailles, both New York place-names, are further reminders of French influence, of which earlier examples are New Rochelle, which had been named by French Huguenots for La Rochelle, their home city in France, and Lake Champlain, which had been named by the famous French explorer as early as 1609.

Clashes with the French and Indians were inevitable as the colonists pushed into the regions of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. Nevertheless both French and Indian influence on place names here has been felt. Indian influence, as we have noted, may be seen in such names as Oshkosh, Kalamazoo, Pontiac, Kankakee, and Michigan. The present city of Pittsburgh (named for William Pitt, a British prime minister) was originally the French Fort Duquesne. French influence was strong in the territory of Louisiana, which had been named for Louis XIV. French colonization on the Gulf of Mexico had by 1700 added the names Mobile (from Spanish *Mauvila*) and Alabama (from the French *Alibamons*, the Indian tribe). In 1718 the settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi was founded and named Nouvelle Orléans in honor of the Duc d'Orléans, the Regent of France. The half-translation *New Orleans* reminds us that the Americans who came into the sovereignty of this great western territory in 1803 were relatively indifferent to names. The spelling of St. Louis, for instance, they preserved, but pronounced it variously as *St. Lewis* and *St. Looney*. Other names in this region which are of French origin include Baton Rouge, Plaquemine, Vacherie, Terrebonne, Abbeville, and Pointe Coupee.

NAMES IN THE SOUTHWEST AND FAR WEST

The admission of Texas after the Mexican War added a host of Spanish names to the map of the United States. Among them are El Paso, located at the spot where Juan de Oñate, conqueror of New Mexico, crossed the Rio Grande in 1598, and Galveston, named for Don José Galvez, Spanish viceroy of Texas who was proclaimed king by the people of Mexico in 1797. Many Amer-

icans have been honored in the names of Texan cities as these examples will show:

Austin. Stephen F. Austin was the first man to establish a permanent American colony in Texas.

Dallas. George M. Dallas was Vice-President under Polk.

Fort Scott. General Winfield Scott of Mexican War fame.

Fort Worth. General William J. Worth was a friend of General Scott.

Houston. General Sam Houston fought the battle of San Jacinto nearby in 1836.

The territory forming the present states of New Mexico and Arizona reveals in its place names its long history as a Spanish colony. The capital city Santa Fe, N.M., is the second oldest city in the United States. Oñate called it La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco. New Mexico's largest city is Albuquerque, named for the Duke of Albuquerque, who visited there in 1703. Many names go back to early missions, such as Taos (earlier San Fernando de Taos), and many Indian villages adopted Spanish names such as San Ildefonso and Santa Clara. In Arizona, Tucson was formerly known as San José de Tucson.

The name *California* appears in a sixteenth-century romance called *Las Sergas de Esplandian* by Ordóñez de Montalvo and designates an island in the Indies ruled by black Amazons. It was the inspiration of many early Spanish explorers and ultimately was applied to the southern part of Lower California and later to the Pacific coast generally. "California" was long believed to be an island or group of islands.

The settlement of Upper California owes more to the Franciscan father Junípero Serra than to any other single person. With the cooperation of the military government under Portolà, Father Serra in 1769 began his work with the foundation of a mission at San Diego and two years later the Mission of San Gabriel Arcangel. The city of Los Angeles began in 1781 as a humble dependent of the San Gabriel mission and was called Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles.

When the Russians began explorations from Alaska, Spain finally was moved to occupy and colonize Upper California. By 1769, missions had been established northward and in 1776 the Mission de los Dolores was dedicated near San Francisco bay. The nearby village of Yerba Buena (named for a medicinal weed) became an official port in 1835 and when it was captured by the Americans in 1846, its name was changed to San Francisco. The Gold Rush three years later transformed the sleepy village into a city.

The city of Monterey, named for a seventeenth-century viceroy of New Spain, was a far more pretentious place in the early days than San Francisco, ninety miles away. The bay, visited and described as early as 1602, was not rediscovered until Father Serra found it and established the San Carlos mission in 1770. The enthusiasm which was felt throughout Mexico and Spain at this event was a determining factor in the further colonization of California at a time when the Americans, Russians, and English were beginning to display great interest in the Pacific Coast. Other cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento have outdistanced Monterey, but for years it remained one of the most Spanish cities in California.

Although Spain took formal possession in 1775 of the region comprising the present states of Washington and Oregon, control passed eventually to the Americans. Captain Robert Gray named the great river of the West the Columbia for his ship in 1792. The territorial claims thus established were implemented by the land explorations of Lewis and Clark. Astoria was the name given to the trading post established by John Jacob Astor of New York, and Vancouver, in Washington, derived its name from Captain George Vancouver, who explored the region in 1791. A small town laid out in Oregon in 1845 was named Portland by a man from Maine.

CLASSICAL INFLUENCE ON PLACE NAMES

In casting about for names to apply to places, Americans have found a fertile source in ancient and classical literature and history. Behind this practice there seems to be the feeling that places

so named will achieve thereby some of the stature of the original place or person.

The name history of Syracuse, N.Y., is in many ways typical of the classical influence on names. The Onondaga Indians (who sided with the British during the Revolutionary War) had a village south of the present site of Syracuse, which was probably visited first by Champlain about 1615 and later (about 1650) by a Jesuit missionary, Simon Le Loyne. A mission established here was captured by the Mohawks and later rebuilt. A trading-post was set up about 1780 and persons interested in the salt wells of the region began to settle there. Of the several villages that grew up, Syracuse became the most important and was made the county seat in 1827. It bore a variety of names in the course of a few years: Bogardus Corners, Milan, Cossit's Corners, and Corinth. John Wilkinson, the first postmaster, is said to have suggested the name Syracuse, after the ancient Sicilian city.

The choice of such names as Corinth and Syracuse is evidence of the classical revival which was spreading over the country. Coinciding as it did with the Revolution and the consequent unpopularity of British names, it produced some startling additions to the map. The town of Vanderheyden's Ferry near Albany had been renamed Troy in 1789, and the following year the Military Tract in central New York State was adorned with classical names, probably at the suggestion of Robert Harpur, Assistant Secretary of State. This tract of a million and a half acres in the Finger Lakes region (comprising the present counties of Onondaga, Cortland, Cayuga, Seneca, and parts of Oswego, Wayne, Tompkins, and Schuyler) had been set aside during the war to provide land for veterans. The Continental Congress and the State of New York, by promising bounties of about six hundred acres, had hoped to spur recruiting. Only a few old soldiers settled here; most of them disposed of their grants before the territory was actually opened up. But in 1790 the area was divided into twenty-five townships, which were given these names:

Lysander
Hannibal
Cato
Brutus

Romulus
Pompey
Scipio
Sempronius

Locke
Homer
Solon
Hector

Camillus	Tully	Ulysses
Cicero	Fabius	Dryden
Manlius	Ovid	Virgil
Marcellus	Milton	Cincinnatus
Aurelius		

From these beginnings, classical names spread far and wide. Central New York is still the "classical belt," but the following list will suggest that the practice of adopting names of famous cities and persons of antiquity was a well-established custom:

PLACES NAMED FOR ANCIENT CITIES AND REGIONS

Antioch, Cal., Ill., Ark., La., Neb., Ohio	Macedon, N.Y. Marathon, N.Y., Wisc., Fla., Tex.
Babylon, N.Y.	Olympia, Wash.
Bucyrus, Ohio	Palmyra, N.Y.
Carthage, Mo., N.Y.	Rome, Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., Miss., Mo., N.Y., Ore., Pa., S.C.
Castalia, Ohio	Sardis, La., Miss., N.D., Ohio, Pa., Tenn.
Corinth, Miss., Ill., Ky., Me., Mont., N.D., N.Y., Vt., Wis.	Shushan, N.Y.
Delphi, Ind., N.Y.	Syracuse, Kan., N.Y., Ind., Neb., S.C., Utah
Delphos, Ohio	Troy, N.Y.
Etruria, N.C.	Utica, N.Y.
Herculaneum, Mo.	
Ilion, N.Y.	
Ithaca, N.Y., Mich.	

PLACES NAMED FOR ANCIENT PERSONS

Apollo, Pa.	Marcellus, Mich., N.Y., Wash.
Aurelius, N.Y.	Mentor, Ohio
Brutus, Ky., Mich., N.Y., Va.	Minerva, Ky., Ohio, N.Y., Ore., Tex.
Camillus, N.Y.	Odin, Ill., Minn.
Cato, Ark., Mo., N.Y., Wisc.	Pomona, Cal., Fla., Ill., Md., Mo., N.C., Kan., N.J., Wash.
Cincinnati, Ind., Iowa, Ohio	Pompey, N.Y.
Diana, N.Y., W.Va.	Rienzi, Miss.
Esculapius, Ky.	Romulus, Mich., N.Y.
Euclid, Minn., N.Y., Ohio, Pa.	Scipio, N.Y.
Galen, N.Y.	Sempronius, N.Y.
Hannibal, Mo., N.Y., Wisc.	Solon, Me., N.Y.
Hector, Minn., N.Y., Pa.	Xerxes, Ky.
Junius, N.Y., S.D.	
Manlius, Ill., N.Y.	

BIBLICAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON PLACE NAMES

BIBLICAL AND PALESTINIAN NAMES

- Bethany, Ala., Cal., Ill., La.,
 Miss., Mo., Neb., N.Y., Pa.
 Bethel, Ark., Conn., Del., Ind.,
 Ky., Me., Mich., Minn., Mo.,
 N.C., N.Y., Ohio, Pa., Vt.,
 Wisc.
 Bethlehem, Conn., Ga., Ind.,
 N.H., Pa.
 Beulah, Ark., Colo., Ga., Ia.,
 Miss., Okla., Ore., Wyo.
 Calvary, Ga., Ky., Wisc.
 Canaan, Conn., Ind., Me., Mo.,
 N.H., N.Y., Vt.
 Carmel, Cal., Ind., Me., N.J.,
 N.Y., Okla., Va.
 Damascus, Ala., Ark., Ga., Md.,
 Miss., Ohio, Pa., Va.
 Ebenezer, Ga., Miss., N.Y., S.C.
 Emaus, Pa.
 Ephratah, N.Y.
 Ezel, Ky.
 Galilee, Ala., Pa.
 Gaza, N.H.
 Gethsemane, Ark., Ky.
 Gilboa, N.H., N.Y., Ohio
 Gilead, Conn., Ind., Me., Mich.,
 Neb.
 Goshen, Ala., Cal., Conn., Ida.,
 Ind., Ky., Mass., N.H., N.J.,
 N.Y., Ohio, Ore., Utah, Vt.
 Hebron, Ark., Col., Conn., Ga.,
 Ill., Ind., Me., Neb., N.D.,
 N.H., Ohio, Utah, W.Va.
 Hiram, Ark., Me., Ohio, Pa.
 Jericho, Ala., Ark., Ky., N.Y.,
 Tex., Vt.
 Jerusalem, N.C., N.Y., Ohio
 Joppa, Ill., Md., Tenn.
 Jordan, Ala., Conn., Minn.,
 Mont., Wyo., N.Y.
 Lebanon, Ark., Conn., Fla., Ill.,
 Ind., Kan., Ky., Mo., Neb.,
 N.H., N.J., N.Y., Ohio,
 Okla., Ore., Pa., S.D., Tenn.,
 Va., Wisc.
 Meron, Ind.
 Moriah, Ala., Ill., N.Y.
 Mt. Carmel, Ala., Conn., Ill.,
 Ind., Ky., N.D., Pa., S.C.,
 Utah
 Nazareth, Ky., Pa.
 Nebo, Ill., Ky.
 Nineveh, Ind., N.Y., Pa.
 Pisgah, Ala., Ill., Miss., W.Va.
 Rehoboth, Ala., Del., Mass., R.I.
 Samaria, Idaho
 Sharon, Conn., Ga., Mass., Mich.,
 Miss., N.D., Ohio, Pa., S.C.,
 Tenn., Vt., Wisc.
 Shiloh, Ark., Fla., Ga., Ill., Me.,
 Miss., N.J., Ohio, S.C., Va.
 Sidon, Ark., Miss.
 Zion, Ark., Mo., Ill., Ky., N.D.,
 N.J., S.C., Va., and the Na-
 tional Park in Utah
 Zoar, Mass., Ohio

OTHER RELIGIOUS NAMES

Mecca, Cal., Ind., Ohio	Wesley, Iowa, Ohio, Me., Pa.
Mahomet, Ill.	(for John Wesley, founder of Methodism)
Alma, Utah	Asbury Park, N.J. (for Francis Asbury, pioneer bishop of Methodism)
Moroni, Utah (from the <i>Book of Mormon</i>)	Lamy, New Mex. (for Jean Baptiste l'Amey, a Catholic Archbishop in the Southwest)
Nephi, Utah (from the <i>Book of Mormon</i>)	
Nauvoo, Ill. (from the <i>Book of Mormon</i>)	
Calvin, Ill., La., N.D., Okla., Pa.	

PLACES NAMED FOR CERTAIN IDEALS

From the time that Roger Williams founded Providence, R.I., to our own days there have been many settlements with names reflecting the aspirations of their founders:

Economy	Union	Concord
Utopia	Liberty	Amity
Harmony	Freedom	Hope
New Harmony	Independence	Fair Play
Philadelphia		

PLACES NAMED FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Names of foreign cities were extensively used for American places, especially after the enthusiasm for ancient and classical names had somewhat subsided. Some of the names were given by European immigrants in memory of their homeland, some were bestowed in the hope that the new city would someday become as famous as or more famous than its older namesake. No complete list can be attempted, so extensive has the practice been, but the following will show the general trend:

PLACES NAMED FOR COUNTRIES OR ISLANDS

Batavia, N.Y.	Bohemia, Fla.
Bavaria, Kan.	Brazil, Ind.
Bermuda, Ala.	Brunswick, N.C.

Canada, Kan.	Guernsey, Ohio
Candia, N.H.	Illyria, Iowa
Castile, N.Y.	Java, N.Y.
Ceylon, Ohio	Jersey City, N.J.
Corfu, N.Y.	Malta, Ohio
Corsica, Pa.	Mexico, Mo.
Cuba, Ala.	Nassau, Fla.
Dalmatia, Pa.	Norway, S.C.
Denmark, N.Y.	Peru, Mass.
Elba, La.	Scandinavia, Wisc.
Franconia, N.H.	Scio, N.Y.
Gibraltar, Pa.	Westphalia, Mich.

PLACES NAMED FOR FAMOUS FOREIGN CITIES

Antwerp, Ohio	Heidelberg, Miss.
Athens, Ga.	Kilkenny, Minn.
Belfast, Me.	Lausanne, Pa.
Bergen, N.J.	Leipsic, Del.
Berlin, N.H.	Leyden, Mass.
Bern, Ind.	Limerick, Me.
Bogota, N.J.	Lisbon, N.D.
Bombay, N.Y.	Lisle, Ill.
Bordeaux, S.C.	Liverpool, N.Y.
Borodino, N.Y.	Lodi, Neb.
Cadiz, Ohio	London, Ore.
Caernarvon, Pa.	Londonderry, Vt.
Cairo, Ill.	Malaga, N.J.
Calais, Me.	Marseilles, Ohio
Canton, Ill.	Memphis, Tenn.
Copenhagen, N.Y.	Milan, Wash.
Cordova, Tenn.	Modena, N.Y.
Corunna, Mich.	Moscow, Me.
Delhi, N.Y.	Newark, N.J.
Dresden, Kan.	Odessa, Del.
Dublin, Ga.	Paris, Me.
Dundee, N.Y.	Ravenna, Ohio
Edinburgh, Miss.	Riga, Mich.
Florence, N.Y.	Rivoli, Ill.
Genoa, Nev.	Rotterdam, N.Y.
Glasgow, Ky.	Savoy, Mass.
Hamburg, S.C.	Scarsdale, N.Y.

Sligo, La.	Tivoli, N.Y.
Smyrna, N.Y.	Vigo, Tex.
Strasburg, Ohio	Warsaw, Ind.
Swarthmore, Pa.	Wilna, N.Y.

Some names of this sort, it should be noted, are deceptive. Poland, Me., is said to have been named, not for the European country, but for an Indian chief, and Poland, Ohio, was so called for the original proprietor of the village, George Poland. Mantua, N.J., represents an Indian word for "frog" and not the Italian city.

PLACES WITH LITERARY NAMES

Names inspired by characters in literature or honoring famous writers are by no means uncommon:

- Arden, N.C. For Shakespeare's Forest of Arden in the play *As You Like It*.
- Auburn, N.Y. For the village in Goldsmith's poem *The Deserted Village*.
- Avoca, N.Y. From Thomas Moore's poem: "Sweet vale of Avoca."
- Avon, N.Y. For Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon.
- Ayden, N.C. Edgar Allan Poe's reference to "distant Aideen."
- Bremer, Iowa. For Fredericka Bremer, Swedish author.
- Byron, Ga. For Lord Byron.
- Cicero, N.Y. For the Roman author.
- Corinna, Me. For the Greek poetess.
- Dryden, N.Y. For the English poet John Dryden.
- Evangeline, Mich. For the heroine of Longfellow's poem.
- Faulkner, Ark. For Sandy Faulkner, the "Arkansas Traveller."
- Guttenberg, Iowa. For the inventor of printing.

- Hawthorne, N.J. For Nathaniel Hawthorne.
Hiawatha, Kan. For the hero of Longfellow's poem.
Homer, N.Y. For the Greek poet.
Horicon, N.Y. Indian, "clear." Applied by James Fenimore Cooper to Lake George.
Irvington, N.J. For Washington Irving.
Ivanhoe, Ill. For Walter Scott's novel.
Jenny Lind, Cal. For the Swedish singer.
Lamartine, Wisc. For the French poet and historian Alphonse de Lamartine.
Locke, N.Y. For the English philosopher John Locke.
Metamora, Ill. Said to be for the Indian hero of a play by Edwin Forrest.
Milton, Vt. For the English poet John Milton.
Montrose, Col. For Scott's legend of Montrose.
Nokomis, Ill. For the character in Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.
Omar, N.Y. Said to be for a character in one of Samuel Johnson's poems.
Ovid, Mich. For the Roman poet.
Romeo, Mich. For Shakespeare's character.
Selma, Ala. For the "Songs of Selma" in the Ossianic poems.
Sidney, Ohio. For the English poet Sir Philip Sidney.
Sigourney, Iowa. For the poet Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney.
Tell, Ind. For William Tell.
Tribune, Kan. For Horace Greeley's newspaper, the New York *Tribune*.
Tully, N.Y. For the Roman historian Marcus Tullius Cicero.
Virgil, N.Y. For the Roman poet Publius Virgilius Maro.
Waverly, Ohio. For Sir Walter Scott's series of novels by that name.

**NAMES WHICH ARE COINAGES OR
CORRUPTED EXPRESSIONS**

PLACES WITH FANCIFUL OR COINED NAMES

Some names appear to have been simply whimsical coinages, often invented, no doubt, for a reason that seemed good at the time. Probably hundreds of these curiosities have long ago disappeared from the map, but enough remain to give foreign and domestic critics an opportunity for satirical observation.

A few may be explained in terms of geographical location:

- Calexico, Calif.** At the border between California and Mexico. Mexicali, in Mexico, is opposite.
- Delmar.** On the border between the states of Delaware and Maryland.
- Fifty-eight, S.C.** Fifty-eight miles from the city of Charleston.
- Idavada.** On the border between the states of Idaho and Nevada.
- Kanopolis, Kan.** A combination of Kansas and Centropolis.
- Mediapolis, Ia.** Midway between Burlington and Washington.
- Ninety-six, S.C.** Ninety-six miles from the town of Keowee.
- Northeast, Pa.** Because of its position in Erie County.
- Texarkana.** On the border between the states of Texas and Arkansas.
- Texhoma, Okla.** On the border between Texas and Oklahoma.
- Texico, N. Mex.** On the border between Texas and New Mexico.
- Texola, Okla.** On the border between Texas and Oklahoma.
- Three Mile Bay, N.Y.** Three miles from Chaumont.

Most of the odd names on the map, however, cannot be treated in separate groups. The origin of many of them is still a matter of dispute and of some may perhaps never be known with certainty:

Caro, Mich. A name coined by the founder, W. E. Sherman.

Climax, Mich. Said to have originated in a remark by an early visitor: "This caps the climax."

Cock Robin, Cal. An island in California, from the nickname of a man called Robin.

Colwich, Kan. A compound of Colorado and Wichita, a railroad.

Copperopolis, Cal. For the copper mines.

Coraopolis, Pa. For Cora, wife of a Mr. Watson, one of the proprietors.

Cynthiana, Ky. For Cynthia and Anna Harris, daughters of the original proprietor.

Deaf Smith, Tex. For an Indian-Mexican scout Erastus Smith, who was deaf.

Dexter, Kan. For a racehorse owned by Robert Bonner of New York.

Dosoris, N.Y. Supposed to be a contraction of *dos uxoris*, Latin for "wife's dowry."

February, Tenn. Named for a resident of the town.

Flagstaff, Ariz. For a pole set up by emigrants at a Fourth of July celebration.

Fredonia, N.Y. "Land of freedom," a name proposed for the United States.

Grenola, Kan. Compounded from the town names Greenfield and Kanola.

Horseheads, N.Y. General Sullivan on his expedition against the Indians had his pack-horses killed and the heads piled up.

Kay County, Okla. Formerly written simply K.

- Klej Grange, Md.** First letters of the names of J. W. Drexel's four daughters: Kate, Louise, Emma, Josephine.
- Le Mars, Iowa.** Compounded of the initials of certain ladies who visited here.
- Mobjack, Md.** Name of a bay where a pirate called Jack was mobbed and thrown overboard.
- Muttonville, N.Y.** For a tallow chandlery.
- Olean, N.Y.** For the nearby oil springs.
- Painted Post, N.Y.** For a painted monument over an Indian chief's grave.
- Paragould, Ark.** A compound of the names of W. J. Paramore and Jay Gould.
- Penn Yan, N.Y.** A combination of Pennsylvanians and Yankees.
- Perth Amboy, N.J.** A combination of the name of the Earl of Perth and the original Indian name *Ompage*.
- Primhagar, Iowa.** Name formed of the initials of persons laying the cornerstone.
- Promised Land, N.Y.** Said to be so named because land was promised for factories but never given.
- Sing Sing, N.Y.** For an Indian, John Sing Sing.
- Spuyten Duyvil.** The channel between the Hudson and Harlem rivers in New York. A Dutch shipmaster swore to pass "in spite of the devil."
- Stamping Ground, Ky.** Because herds of buffalo were frequent in early days.
- Tombstone, Ariz.** Its founder had been told when he set out on his prospecting tour that he would "find his tombstone."
- Vandalia, Ill.** The commissioners are said to have been told as a joke that the selected site was the scene of battles between the Goths and the Vandals.
- Wilkes Barre, Pa.** For two American sympathizers in Britain: John Wilkes and Colonel Barre.
- Ypsilanti, Mich.** Named for a Greek prince.

PLACES NAMED FROM CORRUPTED EXPRESSIONS

Americans (like their British cousins before them) have never hesitated to twist a strange name into something easier to pronounce or to transform it into a name that seems to make sense. Indian, French, and Spanish names have been especially liable to corruption, sometimes with curious results:

Bob Ruly, Mich. French *bois brûlé*, "burnt wood."

Bodock, Ark. French *bois d'arc*, a kind of wood.

Charley Apopka, Fla. Indian *tsalopopkohatchee*, "cat-fish-eating creek."

Des Moines, Iowa. French *rivière des moines*, "river of the monks," from *Moingona*, from an Indian word *mikongang*, "the road."

Glazypool, Ark. French *glaise à Paul*, "Paul's clay-pit."

Goliad, Tex. An anagram of *Hidalgo*, Mexican revolutionary hero.

Hightower, Ga. Indian *etowah*, "river."

Key West, Fla. Spanish *cayo hueso*, "bone reef."

Lapeer, Mich. French *lapier*, "flint" (Flint, Mich., is from the Indian name meaning "river of the flint.")

Little Tabeau, Mo. French *terre beau*, "beautiful land."

Low Freight, Ark. French *l'eau froid*, "cold water."

Loyalhanna, Pa. Indian *laweel-hanna*, "middle stream."

Loyalsock, Pa. Indian *lawi-saqui*, "middle creek."

Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Corruption of Martin, friend of the discoverer.

Masthope, Pa. Indian *mashapi*, "beads of glass."

Mattaponi, Va. Indian *mattachpona*, "no bread," or, as later believed, a combination of the tributary streams called the Mat, Te, Po, and Ny.

Mobile, Ala. Spanish *Mauvila*, from French name for the Indian city *Maubila*.

Movestar, Ill. French *mauvaise terre*, "bad land."

- Newport News, Va. Captain Newport and Captain *Newce*.
- Ozan, Ark. French *prairie d'âne*, "prairie of the donkeys."
- Ozark Mountains. French *aux arcs*, "[Indians] with bows."
- Palarm, Ark. French *place des alarmes*.
- Paola, Kans. Indian pronunciation of *Peoria*.
- Picketwire, Ark. French *Purgatoire*.
- Rapidan River, Va. "Rapid Anne."
- Rickreal, Ore. French *la creole*.
- Sedalia, Mo. Original name Sadieville, for the daughter of a settler.
- Siskiyou, Cal. French *six cailloux*, "six boulders."
- Smackover, Ark. French *chemin couvert*, "covered road."
- Sonora, Cal. Indian pronunciation of Spanish *señora*.
- Tchemanahaut, Ark. French *chemin en haut*, "high road."
- Wellfleet, Mass. Corruption of "whale-fleet."
- Wheeling, W. Va. Indian *weal-in-k* or *wil-ing*, "place of a human head," a white captive's head having been placed on a pole.

Some names are shortened forms of long and often unwieldy designations. The New Mexican capital, founded by Don Juan de Oñate, was called *La Villa Real de la Santa Fé de San Francisco de Assisi*, or "The Royal City of the Holy Faith of St. Francis of Assisi." It has been shortened to *Santa Fe*. The city of Las Animas in Colorado was originally named for a river known somewhat lengthily as *El Rio de las Animas Perdidas en Purgatorio*, "River of the Lost Souls in Purgatory." Los Angeles, Cal., was at first *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles de la Porciuncula*, "Village of Our Lady Queen of the Angels of the Little Portion," the "Little Portion" referring to the land in Assisi given to St. Francis.

PLACE NAMES TODAY

The process of naming and renaming places continues today, even though most of the country has long since been settled. Acting as a kind of arbiter over the matter of current place names is the U.S. Geographic Board, which was established in 1890. Many persons have expressed regret that such a board did not exist from the very beginnings of our history on this continent. And yet one may well believe that even its quiet authority could not have prevented our people from inventing and then fiercely defending a great many place names which appear absurd to us today. There is ample evidence to show that once a name has found its place in common use, efforts to dislodge it are almost always fruitless. The Dutch *Helle-gat* became *Hellgate*, a name so offensive to a number of people that they tried to change it to *Hurlgate*. But it is still *Hellgate*, in great part because Washington Irving gave voice to the people's convictions that the old name must stand.

That the task of the Geographic Board is no easy one becomes apparent at once to the reader of its reports in which decisions are recorded. The members are guided by certain general principles:

- (1) New names should be short, euphonious, and in keeping with the character and traditions of the region.
- (2) Casual, whimsical, and freakish names ought to be eliminated if possible.
- (3) Well-established names should not be changed, however, simply because they do not seem attractive to the present generation.

It is the aim of the Board to record a change of name, once that change has occurred, and to lend the weight of its authority to the single name and to one spelling of that name. Mere proposals for a change of name are not of primary concern. A few actual instances will illustrate the procedure. A small stream in Walker County, Georgia, was known variously as Eukelanaquaw, Big Dry, Big Creek, and West Armuchee. The Board decided in favor of the name West Armuchee Creek, and rejected Dirttown Creek

as the name for another branch in favor of Little Armuchee Creek. The names of two small lakes in Michigan, formerly known as the Alexander Lakes, were changed to Bright Lake and Glory Lake in 1936 because the name Alexander Lakes was duplicated in another county. In explaining its preference, the Board added this comment: "The name Glory has no particular significance, but was substituted in place of Star. Bright and Star were a team of oxen owned by the father of Mrs. Karen B. Hartwich, who donated to the State of Michigan the tract of land, called Hartwich Pines, on which Bright Lake and Glory Lake, formerly called Alexander Lakes, are situated." For a stream in Arizona, the Board rejected Sallymay and Sally May Creek in favor of Salome Creek and urged the acceptance of Chief Noonday Lake (in honor of a prominent Indian of the last century) for a lake in Michigan called Mud Lake. It pointed out that there are 197 Mud Lakes in Michigan. For a creek in South Dakota the names Paradee, Parade, and Prairie were regarded as not so well established as Paradis Creek, inasmuch as the creek had been named for the earliest settler, a certain Telesphor Paradis in 1880.

During World War I it was considered desirable, not to say patriotic, to change German names into something less suggestive of the enemy. The habit of preferring such a term as *Liberty cabbage* to *sauerkraut* had its counterpart in many changes of place names. During World War II there were at first many indications that the Swastikas, Rising Suns, Berlins, and Tokyos in the United States were going to be renamed. However, nothing very extensive was done. In fact, most suggestions that names like Berlin and Tokyo were inappropriate evoked a storm of protest from the local citizenry. The failure of one organized attempt to bring about a change deserves mention, for it is perhaps symptomatic of the new attitude.

A Committee for the Rebirth of Distomo (a village in Greece obliterated by the Nazis) was organized in 1944. Its avowed purpose was to persuade certain American towns and villages named Berlin to change their name to Distomo. At first there seemed reason to believe that the efforts of the committee would be successful. In fact, it was announced that Berlin, Ore., had so changed its name. A reaction, however, was not long in coming. Not only

did the local residents protest the change but soon reports from the Berlins in New Hampshire, New Jersey, and elsewhere came pouring in. In every instance the old name was defended. It was pointed out, among other things, that Berlin, Ore., was in actual fact not named for the German city at all but was a corruption of the earlier *Burrell's Inn*.

Place names get into the news at regular intervals. The coloratura soprano Lily Pons decided to have her 1500 Christmas cards posted at the town of Lilypons, Maryland, which had been named for her. Every December the postal authorities of Santa Claus, Indiana, send out a vast number of letters and cards bearing this appropriate local postmark. The ape-man Tarzan so dear to youngsters is remembered not only in Tarzana, California, but also in Tarzan, Texas.

From time to time our attention is called to certain of the fanciful names that figure upon our maps and in our gazetteers. Consider this group of names, for example:

Hot Coffee, Miss.

Wham, La.

Noodle, Tex.

Bubble, Ark.

Gizzard, Tenn.

Non Intervention, Va.

The Postal Guide does not record these names but does give us others almost as interesting:

Hot Spot, Ky.

Fallen Leaf, Cal.

Figure Five, Ark.

Non, Okla.

Hells Half Acre, Wyo.

Carcess, W. Va.

Index, Ky.

Golf, Ill.

Gladiola, N. Mex.

Ty Ty, Ga.

Yaak, Mont.

Sleepy Eye, Minn.

Zag, Ky.

VII

American Personal Names

AMERICAN personal names derive from a great variety of backgrounds, just as American place names do, since Americans can point to almost every other country in the world as being a home of their ancestors.

In our survey of American personal names we shall begin with the group which historically comes first—the American Indian—whose practice with regard to personal names it is interesting to compare with that of the groups that settled here and founded the country. Then we shall consider in turn the names brought by various national and racial groups which came here later.

EARLY NAMES IN AMERICA

AMERICAN INDIAN NAMES

When the first settlers came to America they found natives whose names were the result of a special sort of process involving totemism and other customs peculiar to primitive peoples. Men like John Eliot, the missionary to the Indians who later translated the Bible into the Indian language, have recorded Indian personal names, such as *Owannamug*, *Tahattawans*, *Nomphon*, and *Pomham*.

Indians had no family names in the sense that the term is used today. When names like those just mentioned were interpreted, it became evident that the savages used only descriptive cognomens or nicknames. These were the true names of Indian warriors; later, other names corresponding somewhat to our honorary titles were adopted. Thus we may say that the true names helped to indicate the social group into which a man was born and that

the second name served to commemorate what he himself had accomplished.

It was only natural that these names should be translated into English, and readers of novels concerning Indian life are familiar with names like Standing Deer, Sitting Bull, and White Tree as well as interpretative phrases such as Wipes His Eyes or Long Time Sleeping. It sometimes happened that a literal translation of such a name sounded odd to English and American ears, largely because the full connotation was not immediately felt. One famous example is that of a Kiowa Indian whose name was Stinking Saddle Blanket. One was supposed to realize that this was an honorable appellation, for this Indian was on the warpath so continuously that he never had time to take off his saddle blanket.

One confusing circumstance about Indian personal names resulted from the widespread habit of changing them at critical times during life. Some notable feat such as the first war expedition or elevation to chieftainship necessitated a new name to replace the old. And when an Indian retired from active life he very often abandoned his own name and took that of his son.

As they have become more and more assimilated, the Indians have increasingly adopted American names, sometimes retaining their tribal names as surnames. Among the Indians of the American Southwest, Spanish names are common. An Indian whose native name means "eagle" might, for example, adopt the given name of José and the surname Aguilar, which is derived from the Spanish for *eagle*.

HOW FIRST NAMES BEGAN

The first Englishmen in America themselves rejoiced in two or more names each, and probably few of them realized that their own names had evolved in ways similar to those of the Indians. And yet it is a fact that many English first names suggest that they were originally the result of a system like that of the American Indians. A few examples will illustrate:

Alfred	good counselor
Arnold	strong as an eagle
Bernard	bold as a bear

Bertram	bright raven
Charles	strong, manly
Edgar	javelin (or protector)
Gerald	spear wielder
Leonard	strong as a lion
Robert	bright in fame
Roger	famous with the spear

What is now called the *Christian name* was probably in earlier times the "christened name." It is the name given at baptism, and this fact is demonstrated by the equivalents in other tongues: French, *nom de baptême*; Spanish, *nombre de bautismo*; Italian, *nome di battesimo*; and German, *taufname*.

It appears that the child in every race receives a label, more or less appropriate, during some kind of ceremony shortly after birth. Nowadays, the fact that Gerard means "strong with a spear" or that Susan means "a lily" is merely incidental; but in early times, and among primitive peoples, the name bestowed had a definite connection with either the circumstances of birth or the hopes and fears of the parents. It is clear that to the barbarian in every part of the world a man's name is a powerful thing. Often a man has a secret or personal name which is never pronounced lest his enemies make use of it to his detriment.

HOW SURNAMES BEGAN

So long as there is but one John or Arthur in a group, no further means of identification seems necessary. But *surnames* (that is, names in addition to the given name) soon became general and by the year 1300 had acquired some permanence, as the names of the fourteenth century writers Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, and John Wycliffe will testify.

Persons devoted to the fascinating subject of surnames (it is sometimes given the rather unwieldy name *patronymatology*) tell us that every English surname evolved in one or the other of four ways:

- I. *Personal*, from the father or an ancestor;
- II. *Local*, from the place of residence;

III. *Occupative*, from a trade or office;

IV. *Nickname*, from bodily attributes, characteristics, and the like.

Let us examine the passenger list of the famous ship *Mayflower* and see to what extent these four methods of naming were used in the production of a representative group of seventeenth century surnames. The forty-two different surnames here represented break up readily into four categories, as follows:

I. PERSONAL NAMES

Steven Hopkins. This is one of the earliest English surnames derived from a baptismal name. It means "son of Robert," or of Hob, a nickname for Robert.

Edmond Margeson. Son of Margaret. This is a *metronymic*, or name derived from the mother rather than the father.

Henry Samson. Son of Sam.

Elias Story. Son of Storr. *Storr* is a Danish name meaning "large, great."

Edward Thomson. Son of Thomas.

Thomas Williams. Son of William.

The word *patronymic*, strictly speaking, means a name like *Edwardson* (i.e., son of Edward) or *MacDonald* (i.e., son of Donald) used as a surname as in John Edwardson or Angus MacDonald; that is, it must have the relationship indicated in the name. But many surnames which began as patronymics were so modified in the course of time by sound changes and spelling peculiarities as to be scarcely recognizable. Thus *Jones* and *Howell* were originally patronymics.

II. LOCAL NAMES

John Alden. Local surname of Saxon origin: *ald* (old) + *den* or *dun* (hill, town).

John Allerton. Cornish: "high green hill."

John Billington. Parish in the diocese of Ely.

- William Bradford. Place name in Wiltshire meaning "broad ford."
- James Chilton. Place name in Wiltshire meaning "chalk hills."
- Edward Doty. Welsh: "ale-house."
- Francis Eaton. Welsh: *au* (water) + *tayn* (small hill).
- William Holbeck. From Holbeach, a town in Lincolnshire.
- John Hooke. A sudden turn or *hook* of a lane.
- William Latham. Local name in Lancashire, originally meant "barn house."
- William Mullines. French: *De Moulin*, "from the mill."
- George Soule. French place name in Lower Navarre, Spain.
- Myles Standish. Parish in Lancashire near Wigan.
- Edward Tillie. Town in France.
- William Trevor. Cornish: "the great town."
- Richard Warren. From the town of Varenna in France.
- Gilbert Winslow. Place name in Buckinghamshire.

III. OCCUPATIVE NAMES

- William Brewster. Brewer of malt liquor.
- Robert Carter. Cart-driver.
- John Carver. Wood-carver.
- Richard Clarke. Learned man (clerk); able to read and write.
- Francis Cooke. Cook.
- Humility Cooper. Maker of barrels.
- Moses Fletcher. Maker of arrows (French: *flèche*).
- Edward Fuller. One who "fulls" or thickens cloth.
- Richard Gardenar. Gardener.
- John Goodman. Householder (goods).
- Desire Minter. Mint-master.

Diggory Priest. Priest.
 Thomas Tinker. Traveling pedlar.
 John Turner. One who uses a lathe.

IV. NICKNAMES

Peter Brown. For the color.
 Thomas English. For the nation.
 Christopher Martin. Warlike.
 Jasper More. Gaelic: "great chief."
 William White. For the color.
 Roger Wilder. Traveler, foreigner, or pilgrim.

THE SPELLING OF SURNAMES

Variations in the spelling of modern surnames are quite common. *Smith*, *Smyth*, and *Smythe* exist side by side today, and any one who looks for the name that sounds like *Johnson* in the telephone directory may choose among *Johnsen*, *Johnston*, *Johnson*, *Johnstone*, *Jonson*, and *Jonsson*.

Such variations began early, at a time before spelling became more or less standardized. The fact that England's greatest playwright signed his name in several different ways, sometimes depending upon the amount of space available on the sheet, is a fact generally known. Although the spelling *Shakespeare* seems fairly well established today, the variant spellings *Shakspear*, *Shakspeare*, and *Shakspēr* appear on Elizabethan documents. One paper believed to have been signed by the dramatist himself uses the form "Willm Shakp." Nowadays we seldom abbreviate our surnames, although we still may shorten our given names.

The early records, often written by professional scribes, contain hundreds of examples illustrating this lack of spelling uniformity. One authority provides what is probably the classic example when he extracts this entry:

On April 23, 1470, Eliz. Blynkkynesopppe, of
 Blynkynsoppe, widow of Thomas Blynkyensope, of
 Blynkkensope, received a general pardon.

PURITAN INFLUENCE ON NAMES

When Max Beerbohm in his delightful novel of English university life, *Zuleika Dobson*, introduced into the narrative an American Rhodes scholar, he bestowed upon him the name Abimelech V. Oover. In choosing Abimelech, Beerbohm was merely poking fun at the custom, prevalent among the Puritans, of selecting names from the Old Testament. So general was this practice at one time that one writer observed that a list of the first names of early immigrants to America sounds like a roster of those who crossed, not the Atlantic, but the Red Sea. The *Mayflower* passenger list, it may be mentioned, is not notably adorned with Biblical names but it does include these:

Thomas	Mary	Joseph
Elias	Elizabeth	Priscilla
Moses	Bartholomew	Susanna
Christopher	Samuel	Ann
John	Solomon	Sarah
Peter		

Closely allied to this custom was the use of abstract terms, qualities, and the like, suggestive of Puritan aspirations. In the *Mayflower* list we find these names:

Humility	Remember	Wrestling
Love	Desire	Resolved

It is known that some of the Puritans deliberately adopted harsh or unpleasant names drawn from the Old Testament, perhaps as a form of penance or humility. And possibly that may help to account for *Abimelech*, who was hardly an admirable person in Biblical history.

That Biblical names tended to persist in successive generations in America is amply demonstrated by a representative list of American first names. Examination of the first one thousand names in a recent volume of *Who's Who in America* provides us with the following, in addition to those just given:

Elam	Noah	Jesse
Jonathan	Jacob	Eliphalet

Timothy	Abraham	Saul
Obadiah	Daniel	Ethan
Job	Lemuel	Caleb
Seth	Hiram	Silas
Joshua	Absalom	Nathan
Elijah	Naaman	Hosea

From this same list we may also extract the following:

Onward	Reason	Comfort
Fountain	Faith	

HOW SURNAMES BECAME AMERICAN

Many of us like to simplify the problem by assuming that English names constitute the standard to which foreign names adapt themselves more or less completely. There is no harm in doing this if we remember that many "English" names among the first colonists were themselves of foreign origin and illustrate the sort of changes that are still taking place in American surnames today. Even among the *Mayflower* group there were surnames such as *Fletcher* which were originally French, and it is believed that *Carter* was the English equivalent of the French *Cartier*.

It is true, however, that names have a tendency to become English in form and sound. These are the ten most common surnames in this country:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Smith | 6. Miller |
| 2. Johnson | 7. Davis |
| 3. Brown | 8. Anderson |
| 4. Williams | 9. Wilson |
| 5. Jones | 10. Moore |

But there is no telling how many persons who bear these names have done so all their lives, or how many have parents whose names were different from these.

All *Smiths*, for example, are not necessarily of British origin. The German *Schmidt* is easily changed to *Smith* by mere re-spelling, and the Irish *MacGowan* becomes *Smith* by translation, as does the Czech *Kovacs*. *Johnson*, *Williams*, *Jones*, and *Ander-*

son also are patronymics which in their present form may represent a variety of national origins. For example, *Johnson* has absorbed such variants as Irish *MacShane*, Dutch *Jansen*, and Swedish *Johansson*, all of which mean the same as *Johnson*. There is observable a distinct tendency for the more common name to absorb the less-common name. *Burns* absorbs *Byrne* and *Davis* absorbs *Davies*. Some *Smiths* prefer the more ornamental form *Smythe*, but on the whole the tendency in America is toward simplification.

Most important, however, is the fact that names suffer like other words from the wear and tear of common speech. Clipping or other forms of abbreviation account for a large number of present-day surnames. We are not surprised when a man named *Riemenschneider* decides to call himself *Snyder*, but we may overlook the fact that this process is also at work upon English surnames. Hyphenated surnames such as *Rice-Oxleigh* do not often survive in full. *Berkeley* may become *Barclay*; *Lea*, or *Leigh*, may become *Lee*; *Parkhurst* may be shortened to *Parker*; *Derby* tends to become *Darby*, as pronounced; and *Cadwallader* may become *Caldwell*.

FRENCH NAMES

The French influence on American personal names has been considerable in certain sections of the country. Millions of Americans have sprung from the Canadian *habitants*, mostly from the Quebec region, who came to New England, but just as many derive from religious refugees who were scattered in various parts of the country. The Huguenots, for example, settled in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Amsterdam, Staten Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and in smaller numbers throughout the South. Most of the French in Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee came originally from Huguenot centers in South Carolina.

Two other sources of French influence should be mentioned. In the West, the French of the Great Lakes region and the Mississippi valley influenced many American personal and place names. The famous exodus of the Acadians to the seaboard colonies and to Louisiana must also be considered. French family names, more or less anglicized, appear in records throughout the

country. But it is safe to say that most Frenchmen sought to forget the language and customs of the land from which they had been driven in order that they might enter more readily into American life.

It has been said that French surnames fared least well of all non-English names in America. In New England, they were often translated, and many Acadians named *Dubois* called themselves *Wood* or *Woods*, while their neighbors the *Leblancs* adopted the surname *White*. In the South, French surnames sometimes came under Spanish influence with the result that a name like *Chouteau* might acquire the spelling *Choto*. In our discussion of place names, we observed some distortions of French names in Louisiana and Arkansas.

Some historians of language claim that the New England name *Bunker* was originally *Bon Coeur*, and there can be little doubt that anglicization, a process which began in early times in England, was continued in America with this result:

FRENCH	AMERICAN
Cartier	Carter
Denis	Denny
Pibaudière	Peabody
St. Cyr	Sears
Gervaise	Jarvis
Langlois	Langley
La Rivière	Larrabee

Pronunciation usually became Americanized even when the spelling persisted unchanged.

SPANISH NAMES

Persons of Spanish origin settled early in the regions of Florida, Louisiana, Texas, the Southwest, and California. It has been estimated that in 1790 there were 12,850 French in the Louisiana Purchase region and 2600 Spanish; what is called the "Spanish Southwest" (*i.e.*, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and parts of Nevada, Utah, and Colorado) was exclusively Spanish,

with a total of 23,000 inhabitants. Unlike some of the other colonists of the New World, the Spanish settlers mingled readily with the aboriginal natives and intermarried freely, thus perpetuating elements of Spanish culture, including Spanish names.

Generally speaking, Spanish names in America have changed little. Such common Spanish names today as *Gomez*, *Perez*, *Lopez*, *Hernandez*, *Garcia*, and *Gonzalez* were just as frequent in the earlier days of Spanish influence. One change in name practice, however, that might be noted is the disappearance of the multiple surname such as *Hernandez y Rita* and the dropping of the *de* as in *de Soto*, which was indicative of upper class status.

Spanish names occur most frequently today in the Southwest generally because the earlier settlers perpetuated themselves there and because immigrants from Mexico tend to settle in that region. In recent years there has been an increase in the incidence of Spanish names in the Northeast, with the immigration from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and South America. Throughout, there has been little inclination on the part of these Spanish-speaking peoples to make major changes in their names, although changes have occurred in spelling and pronunciation. Thus *José* often loses its accent mark, and names like *Sedillo* (pronounced "Sedeelyo" in Spanish) are sometimes pronounced as if they were American words.

NEW NETHERLANDS DUTCH NAMES

The Dutch of New Netherlands were less inclined than certain other immigrant groups to move about from one part of the country to another. There was little incentive to emigration in the homeland, and the colony was in a sense isolated at an early date and continued to be a relatively static group. Of the total Dutch population of the country in 1790 (an estimated 106,000) some 90,000 were concentrated in the region of the original Dutch settlements in New York and New Jersey.

One might be inclined to think that Dutch surnames would be less liable to change than those of other national groups. Some of the wealthier residents were able to maintain their original names, but the majority yielded gradually to the conventions of

the English. Names like *Stuyvesant* and *Van Rensselaer* survive in their original form today, but other names underwent the familiar changes:

DUTCH	AMERICAN
Haerlens	Harlands or Herlands
Van de Veer	Vandiver
Kuiper	Cooper

As was the case with many other national groups, the Dutch in the earliest colonial days had no strong sense of surnames. In some families patronymics such as *Hansen* (son of Hans) or *Jansen* were used; in others a descriptive surname such as *Van Dyck* or *Ten Eyck* was the rule. After the English conquest of 1664, the descriptive surname tended to become usual. When the Dutch, as they sometimes did, migrated to other colonies, their names often became completely anglicized. A typical instance is the name *Longstreet*, originally *Langestraet*.

NAMES FROM NEW SWEDEN

Like the Dutch, the original Scandinavian immigrants had a double system of surnames. Patronymics such as *Carlson* and *Johansson* were varied with descriptive surnames such as *Aberg*, *Lie*, *Bremer*, *Heiberg*. To complicate matters, the Scandinavians often adhered to the practice of "circulating patronymics" whereby the son of *Carl Peterson* became *Hans Carlson* and the latter's son became *Peter Hansen*. The name *Kristin Lavrandsatter*, which occurs in a well-known novel, serves to remind us that this practice at one time applied also to women.

Although the colony of New Sweden was conquered by the Dutch as early as 1655, effective resettlement did not take place at once and the Swedish language and customs established themselves fairly well. Many Swedes removed to the New Netherlands region; many went south. But it was the later immigrations that made the Swedes such an important part of the American scene. They began arriving in the 1850s and settled for the most part in the upper Middle West, where they were re-enforced by large

numbers of Danes and Norwegians. Consequently, it is in this region that the common Scandinavian names are concentrated.

LATER NAMES FROM ABROAD

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of great immigration into the United States from virtually every other country in the world, and it was during this era that names of foreign origin took a prominent place in the roster of American surnames. Because of our ignorance of the native languages of these newcomers, many of the new names had a strange sound and often seemed to us to be of rather mysterious derivation. But these names were actually derived on the same principles as the more familiar English names. Thus the Slavic *Ivanovich* is "John," derived from *Ivan*, and *vich*, meaning "son of," and so is the equivalent of the English *Johnson*.

The meaning of other names may be similarly studied by seeing how the four sources of English surnames apply to foreign names. Here are some of the common forms which are used in patronymics: In Gaelic we have *Mc* or *Mac*; in Slavic languages, *-witz*, *-wicz*, *-vic*, and *-vich*, as in *Horowitz*, *Ianowicz*, and *Adamovic*; in Greek, *-opoulos*, as in *Giannopoulos*. Names for local places yield the *-ski* and *-sky* endings in the Slavic languages, the German *Goldberg* (gold mountain), the Swedish *Sjöstrand* (seashore), the Norwegian *Bakken* (hill), the Finnish *Joki* (river), and the Italian *Monteverde* (green mountain). Names for occupations are also common. In German we have *Schneider* (tailor), *Weber* (weaver), *Müller* (miller), *Lehrer* (teacher), *Schreiber* (clerk), *Schumacher* (shoemaker). In Slavic there are *Kovács* (smith), *Meszaros* (butcher), *Kerekes* (wheelwright). Armenian yields *Tertzagian* (tailor) and *Hatzakordzian* (baker). Names taken from nicknames include the following: German *Weiss* (white), Italian *Piccolo* (little), Yugoslavian *Černe* (black), Hungarian *Sebes* (speed).

The fate of foreign names in America has been a various one. Many names, of course, remain in their original form, particularly those that are simple to pronounce and to spell in English. However, even with these there is generally some change made in the

sounding of the names whether or not they retain their original spelling. Some names are translated into their English equivalents, and, again, examples may be drawn from the above list.

The difficulty in pronouncing many foreign names has led to the clipping of many of the longer ones. Thus the Greek name *Pappas* might have been originally *Pappadakis*, *Pappachristides*, or *Pappadimitracoupoulos*. *Pappas* has the meaning of "priest." Jews or Russians bearing the name *Gorevitch* may shorten it to *Gore*. Poles named *Winiarecki* and *Pietruszka* become *Winar* and *Pietrus*.

Similar to this process is that of transliterating foreign names; that is, of changing them to accepted American names that sound similar to the original names. Thus the Yugoslav *Oblač* changes it to *O'Black*, *Ogrin* to *O'Green*, *Jačša* to *Jackson*. The Italian *Bello* becomes *Bellows*, *Lauria* becomes *Lowery*, and *Lanza* becomes *Lance*. The German *Schneider* may be changed to *Snyder*, *Muller* to *Miller*, and *Pfund* to *Fund*.

We may now consider the names of some of these groups separately and in greater detail.

SCOTTISH NAMES

The ten commonest surnames in Scotland are:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Smith | 6. Wilson |
| 2. Macdonald | 7. Thomson |
| 3. Brown | 8. Stewart |
| 4. Robertson | 9. Anderson |
| 5. Campbell | 10. Scott |

Four of these (*Smith*, *Brown*, *Wilson*, and *Anderson*) are found among the ten commonest American surnames. It is not always possible to say that a name is definitely of Scottish origin. Names like *Buchanan*, *Ramsay*, *Frazer* also occur commonly in Ireland, and *Gibson*, *Graham*, and *Russell* are widely represented in England.

WELSH NAMES

The Welsh, like the Swedes, often favored the "circulating patronymic." *Evan*, the son of *Hugh*, called himself *Evan ap*

Hugh, and *ap Hugh* as a surname tended in America to become either *Hughes* or *Pugh*, just as *ap Howell* showed a tendency to change to *Howell*, *Howells*, or *Powell*. A similar origin may be attributed to *Jones*, son of John. The Welsh habit of using *ff* instead of *F*, for example, in such names as *ffoulkes* or *ffinch*, did not establish itself in America, since we use the forms *Foulkes* and *Finch*. The common surname *Morgan* is of Welsh origin.

IRISH NAMES

The study of Irish surnames in America is complicated by the fact that in Ireland itself surnames are variously used and indicate various origins. The general tendency in America has been to change the Irish names into more English-looking forms. Sometimes this has meant *abbreviation*:

O'Sullivan becomes *Sullivan*;

sometimes *translation*:

MacShane becomes *Johnson*;

sometimes *re-spelling*:

Kerr becomes *Carr*.

The twelve commonest surnames in Ireland are:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. Murphy | 7. Doyle |
| 2. Kelly | 8. Reilly |
| 3. Walsh | 9. O'Brien |
| 4. Sullivan | 10. McCarthy |
| 5. Byrne | 11. Gallagher |
| 6. Ryan | 12. Smith |

Of these, only the last, *Smith*, finds a place among the ten leading United States surnames, but the others are all common American names nevertheless.

GERMAN NAMES

German immigrants, unlike the Swedes, Welsh, Irish, and Dutch, came to America with the surname idea fully developed.

Nevertheless, their names underwent changes, for in America the English form of surname has always provided the pattern. There have been two principal waves of German immigration, one in the eighteenth century and the other about 1850. The Pennsylvania-Dutch region, which extends into Maryland, had over 90,000 settlers before the Revolutionary War. They spoke of their language as "Deutsch" and as a result the term *Pennsylvania-Dutch* became established.

German as a language is characterized by certain combinations of sounds that are difficult for the American to pronounce. One can easily see why many names should change almost at once in the direction of conformity with English names. A few representative changes will indicate the trend:

GERMAN	AMERICAN
Sänger	Singer
Kuntz	Coons <i>or</i> Kuhns
Kuehle	Keeley
Schwab	Swope
Fuhrmann	Foreman
Jung	Young
Mueller	Miller
Schneider	Snyder
Huber	Hoover

Many were translations:

GERMAN	AMERICAN
Zimmermann	Carpenter
König	King
Schumacher	Shoemaker
Sonntag	Sunday
Jaeger	Hunter
Stein	Stone
Reich	Rich

A name such as *von Grau* usually lost the *von* and became either plain *Grau* or added *-er* to become *Grauer*. *Pfeiffer* some-

times became *Pepper* but not always. A glance at a telephone directory will show many *Pfeiffers* as well as these names:

Pfaff	Pfanstiehl	Pflantz
Pfaffle	Pfau	Pfleuger
Pfahler	Pfeferblum	Pforzheimer
Pfaltz	Pfeffer	

JEWISH NAMES

Until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jews had no surnames, as we understand the term today. Instead, in common with many other peoples, they bore patronymics. The word *ben*, meaning "son," served to form these patronymics; among them were such names as *Ben Joseph*, *Ben David*, and *Ben Moses*. When the exigencies of modern life required them to adopt surnames, they often chose or were given names that were common in the countries in which they were then living, chiefly German- and Slavic-speaking countries. This accounts for the high incidence among Jews of such names as *Goldberg*, *Goldstein*, *Friedman*, *Greenberg*, *Berkowitz*, and *Brodsky*. At the same time Jews drew upon the Bible for surnames and, as a result, we have *Moses*, *Benjamin*, *Abraham* or *Abram*, and *David*. Frequently an *s* was added to these names to form *Isaacs*, *Josephs*, *Abrams*, *Samuels*, and others. It is interesting to note that while these Biblical names are commonly borne by non-Jews as personal names, it is rare to find them used as the surnames of persons who are not Jewish. The Hebrew language has also yielded such names as *Baruch* (blessed), *Cohen* (priestly), *Rabi* (teacher), *Arje* (lion), and *Malik* (kingly).

Changes in the surnames of Jews are rather frequent. *Cohen*, the most common Jewish name, may be changed to *Cowan*, *Cohn*, *Kohn*, or *Conn*. The second most common, *Levy*, may take the form of *Lee*, *Levine*, *Levin*, *Lewin*, *Levitt*, *Levy*, or *Levey*. Changes in Jewish names of other origins follow the same course as the other names in these languages. Many of the earliest Jewish immigrants were of Spanish or Portuguese origin and their descendants have, for the most part, kept their names intact: *Cardozo*, *da Silva*, *de Sola*, *Perera*, *Mayorcas*.

ITALIAN NAMES

Italian personal names, like the Spanish names, have remained closer to their original form than most other foreign names. Names like *Rossi*, *Miraglia*, *Romeo*, *Santini*, *Alcino*, *Zucca*, and *Giuliani* are common in places with large populations of Italian origin. The greatest change in Italian names occurs in their pronunciation. The soft *c* as in *Alcino* (pronounced "Alcheeno") is more often sounded like an *s*, while the *g* followed by an *i* as in *Giuliani* (pronounced "Zhulyahnee") is often sounded like "Jeeuliani" or "Ghecooliani." First names are generally anglicized, so that Giovanni becomes John and Giuseppe becomes Joseph.

POLISH NAMES

Polish-Americans, like other Americans of Slavic origin, have great difficulty with their names for several reasons. First, most names seem unpronounceable to non-Polish Americans because of the spelling. Thus *Kowalczyk* and *Szymanowski* might be better received if they were spelled *Kovalchik* and *Seemanovsky*, as they are more nearly pronounced. Second, the large concentration of consonants, unrelieved by vowels, discourages pronunciation. Third, most Polish names seem long to American ears. Consequently, they have little chance of surviving in their original form in America. The characteristic *-owski* and *-wicz* endings are often lopped off so that *Filipowicz* becomes *Philips* and *Bartoszewicz*, *Barton*. Transliterations are made, transforming *Jaroszcz* into *Jerris*. Among the translations are:

POLISH	AMERICAN
Kuchacz	Cook
Mielnick	Miller
Tomaszewski	Thompson
Krawiec	Taylor
Kowalczyk	Smith

FIRST NAMES TODAY

An analysis of a list of persons owning land in Boston before 1700 shows that of 240 first names of men the most popular were:

John	(44)	Robert	(15)
William	(33)	Edward	(11)
Thomas	(21)	James	(10)
Richard	(20)		

A comparable list today, taken from a recent volume of *Who's Who in America* shows the relative popularity of men's first names to be much the same. Of about 1200 names considered, the following are the most often encountered:

William	(89)	James	(35)
John	(69)	Frank	(32)
Charles	(65)	Frederick	(25)
George	(44)	Robert	(24)

The first names of women on the passenger list of the *Mayflower* show the following order of preference:

Elizabeth	Margaret	Lydia
Mary	Priscilla	Martha
Sarah	Ellen	

Analysis of the first names of modern women, based on a recent list of 535 graduates of a prominent woman's college, gives the following order of preference:

Elizabeth	Margaret	Katherine
Mary	Nancy	Helen
Ann	Joan	Patricia
Barbara	Jean	

NAMESAKES

Americans have been no exception to the widespread custom of honoring a great man by naming a child for him. Often those honored are important national figures. During and after the American Revolution, boys were frequently christened George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander

Hamilton, or Andrew Jackson. In fact, the naming of infants was often considered a splendid opportunity to display one's political feelings. In the days when the British ruled Boston, for example, certain names were frowned upon by the colonists favoring independence, and the father of a child named Thomas Gage for the British governor soon found himself in serious difficulties with his neighbors.

It would be impossible to draw up a list of the statesmen and warriors whose names have been perpetuated in this way without presenting an almost complete roster of famous Americans. Presidents, statesmen, soldiers, and authors perhaps account for most of the names fastened proudly upon the young in successive generations. Revivalists and missionaries have been similarly honored, as the frequent occurrence of *Lorenzo Dow* as first and middle names will testify. The Reverend Lorenzo Dow was a tremendously influential itinerant preacher, widely known as a result of his travels. Great numbers of babies born during his life bear his somewhat exotic first name.

An examination of our list from *Who's Who in America* gives some idea of the extent to which this custom has persisted. Here are some first and middle names that appear to be tributes to well-known persons:

John Jay	Henry Clay
Daniel Webster	Ethan Allen
Elmer Ellsworth (the first Union soldier killed in the Civil War)	Lincoln
Franklin Pierce	Hamilton
Washington Irving	George Washington
Lincoln	Roger Sherman
Benjamin Franklin	Thomas Edison
John Eliot	James Madison
Robert E. Lee	Ulysses Grant
	Cleveland

And to show that those honored were not always Americans, we might add these names from this same list:

William Tell	Joseph Addison
John Wesley	Carlyle (for Thomas Carlyle)
Martin Luther	John Milton
Robert Burns	

The eldest son in American families very often receives his father's name and may have to submit to being called "Junior" for long after he has grown to man's estate. In some families the name is carried on by successive eldest sons who may add to their name a numeral such as *3rd* or *4th*. John Smith II, however, may owe his name to his uncle or some other relative. Younger sons are variously named. It should be mentioned that the custom of using surnames as baptismal names (except where this practice runs counter to ecclesiastical requirements) has opened up immense possibilities. Examples will occur readily to the reader. Milton, Smith, Lee, Sherman, Franklin, and Cleveland are found in the list we have been considering. In time, if used often enough, these names lose their surname "flavor" and are then accepted as common first names.

It is possible that the American custom of using the first initial and the full middle name has helped to establish surnames as given names. Thus, John Wesley McBride may sign his name J. Wesley McBride and be known to his friends as Wesley. And if Elmer Ellsworth Jones should prefer to be known as Ellsworth Jones, he has ample precedent among well-known persons past and present.

The variety of names for girls appears to be limitless. Fashions in girls' names have changed from generation to generation. A glance at family genealogies will show that at certain periods parents showed a preference for names of jewels, such as Opal, Ruby, and Pearl, and at other times they seemed to favor plant names like Fern and Ivy, as well as recognized flower names such as Rose, Violet, Hyacinth, and Lily. Today the names of screen celebrities are being bestowed upon baby girls, and there appears to be a marked tendency to use surnames as first names for girls as well as for boys. But one feels that as a general rule parents today are less inclined than formerly to cruelty in this matter. There is little chance that anyone will emulate the ancestor of Admiral Dewey who named his youngest girl *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

World War I brought into temporary popularity the word *Liberty* as a girl's first name. Parents who had hoped for a son and who had decided that he should be called George or Charles

have sometimes bestowed these names upon the baby girl. However, in this respect, Americans rarely conceive a name as being applicable to either boys or girls, as the English do with *Vivian*, *Evelyn*, *Leslie*, *Shirley*, and *Marian*. On the other hand, nicknames and diminutives are often contrived that may be applied to both sexes like *Bobbie* (for *Barbara* or *Roberta* and *Robert*), *Lou* (for *Louise* or *Louis*), *Al* (for *Alice* and *Albert* or *Alfred*), *Bert* (for *Bertha* and *Bertrand*), *Jackie* (for *Jacqueline* and *John*), *Ed* (for *Edna* and *Edward*).

VIII

Terms from Traditional American Activities

AS we have already suggested, new words and adaptations of new words do not arise in a vacuum, but are closely related to the lives that people lead. Our surroundings, activities, hopes, and ambitions are clearly reflected in the words we use in talking about them. The American language can be profitably discussed by relating many of its words and terms to the activities that Americans have carried on over the years in their daily lives.

Sailing men, farmers, ranchers, railroad men, shopkeepers, housewives, schoolmen and pupils, church leaders and churchgoers, theater and circus people all have their own special vocabularies, but more important to the language as a whole is the fact that many of their words and expressions have come into general use and have assumed a place in the everyday vocabulary of the average American. Sometimes these terms mean just what they meant in the special fields. Examples are the seaman's *Davy Jones' locker*, the railroad man's *cow catcher*, the actor's *repertory theater*. But many times, while retaining some of their original meaning, they have acquired a more extended meaning, and may be used to cover more general situations than they once did. Thus when a sailor spoke about a ship *backing and filling* he referred to a definite nautical procedure, but when an average American uses the same term he means "to vacillate," since vacillating is similar to the ship's backing and filling. Likewise, when a locomotive engineer refers to a place as a *whistle stop* he means a station where he stops only on signal. But in common language *whistle stop* is a rather contemptuous reference to a town or hamlet so small that railroads do not deem it worthy of a regular stop in their schedules.

Once again, we ought to bear in mind the changing nature of

the American language. As we shall see in the pages immediately following, even though the activities themselves are old and traditional, many of the terms which refer to them are of rather recent origin. This is understandable, for new processes and objects come into being that must be named. Probably more new terms will be found in our Transportation category than in any other for the simple reason that transportation has undergone so many changes in recent years.

FARM AND RANCH TERMS

back land. Land lying behind more settled areas.

back log. A log, usually large, set at the back of a wood fire in a fireplace. Now commonly used to refer to any sustaining reserve.

backwoods. Uncleared forest west of the settlements. Is used colloquially to refer to any isolated community.

bad-lands. Translation of the French *mauvaises terres*: arid barren lands in certain parts of the West.

bed-roll. Waterproofed tarpaulin folded and snapped together around three or four blankets to form a bed for the cowboy.

bee-line. Direct course taken by a bee in returning to its hive; figuratively, as in the phrase *make a bee-line for*.

blaze. To mark a tree by slicing off a piece of bark. By extension *to blaze a trail* means "to pioneer in any field."

bluff. Noun: steep bank of a river (1687); verb: to impress or scare off by a mere show of strength.

brand. Mark of ownership burned on the hide of an animal. Now refers to any distinctive marking used to indicate ownership or manufacture.

breaking. Taming and training a wild or untrained horse.

bronco. Spanish "rough, rude." A wild or semi-wild horse.

buck. To pitch or plunge suddenly, said of a bronco. By extension, to combat something, as *to buck against fate*.

- buckboard.** A light four-wheeled buggy, possibly so named because the seat, which is elevated and on springs, bucks or jounces when the vehicle passes over a rough road.
- buckshot.** Large shot used in shooting deer (the male deer is a *buck*) (1775).
- bulldog.** To force a steer to the ground, as dogs once did in *bullbaiting*.
- bullfrog.** Species of large frog, so called from its loud bellowing note and heavy build (1698).
- bunkhouse.** Temporary structure in which miners, cowboys, lumbermen, and the like sleep.
- butternut.** The white walnut, so called because of the oil in the nut.
- cactus.** A thorny plant found in the Southwestern desert country, sometimes cultivated for its attractive flowers or for its narcotic property.
- canvas-back.** A species of wild duck, so named because of the color of the back feathers.
- catnip.** A common aromatic weed. Called *catmint* in England.
- cayuse.** Wild horse of Oregon; any undersized western horse. Named for an Oregon Indian tribe. See *mustang*.
- chuck.** Name for food used by the cowboys, perhaps from *chuck*, a portion of a side of dressed beef.
- cinch.** Spanish *cincha*, "girth." A broad horsehair girth or band. Colloquially, a dead certainty or an easy task.
- claim.** A piece of land staked out by a miner in accordance with mining law.
- claim-jumper.** One who takes unlawful possession of another's claim.
- clingstone.** A variety of peach in which the flesh adheres closely to the stone (1705).
- corduroy road.** A road made of transverse tree trunks through a muddy or swampy area, so named from its

- resemblance to the ribbed fabric, called by the French *corde du roi*, "king's cord."
- corncrib.** Or *crib*. A box or bin or building, usually of slats, in which Indian corn is kept (1687).
- corral.** A pen or enclosure for cattle, horses, and the like.
- cottontail.** The common rabbit, so called from the white-tufted underside of the tail.
- cottonwood tree.** An American species of poplar, so called from the cottony hairs of the seeds.
- cowboy.** Originally, a member of Tory guerrilla bands during the Revolutionary War, near New York. Later, on a ranch, a mounted employee who assists in handling cattle.
- cowpen.** To render land fertile by penning cattle upon it (1688).
- creamery.** A small building where milk is stored or where milk, butter, cheese, etc. are prepared for market.
- creek.** Spelled *crick* in 1608. Stream forming a tributary to a larger body of water; a brook.
- critter.** In colloquial usage as a variant of the word *creature*; any one of various domestic animals, especially cows.
- cropper.** One who raises a crop, especially a tenant who works for a portion of the crop, and is called a *sharecropper*.
- crowbar.** An iron or steel bar with a beak or a claw used as a pry or lever.
- cultivator.** Horse-drawn agricultural implement for breaking land or cultivating growing crops.
- dally.** Spanish *dar la vuelta*: "take a turn or twist with a rope." A half-hitch around the saddlehorn after an animal has been caught with a lariat.
- desert rat.** An old prospector.
- diamond hitch.** Hitch used in fastening a pack on a horse, in which the rope forms a diamond-shaped quadrilateral.
- dirt road.** An unimproved road.

- dogie.** Western for a motherless calf; a neglected or inferior animal. Probably the name is a corruption of "dough-guts," a pot-gutted orphan calf.
- drift fence.** Fence designed to prevent cattle from drifting or wandering aimlessly too far from their home range, especially before a winter storm.
- dry farming.** Farming without irrigation, in semi-arid regions.
- dry gulch.** To ambush and assassinate.
- dude ranch.** A ranch providing entertainment in riding, cow-punching, etc. for paying guests, usually *dudes* or city-bred Easterners.
- Dutch oven.** A heavy skillet on three legs for cooking over hot coals in the open.
- elevator.** Machine for hoisting grain (1787). Large building for storing grain (1865). The English *lift*: an ascending chamber.
- fair.** An occasional exhibition of products, generally not for sale, but to promote interest (1805).
- fodder.** The corn plant used as food for livestock (1688).
Coarse food for cattle, horses, and sheep.
- foothills.** The hills at the foot of a mountain or mountain range.
- foreman.** Ranch manager employed by the owner. Now applied generally to certain supervisors of workmen.
- forty-five.** Name for a .45 caliber gun.
- forty-niner.** One who went to California in 1849 with the gold rush.
- four-flusher.** One who "bluffs." Especially in poker, one who has four cards of one suit but lacks the fifth of the same suit.
- frame house.** A house in which the frame and usually the walls are made of lumber (1777).
- gartersnake.** A small, harmless snake with yellow stripes on the back (1775).

- gobbler.** The male turkey, so named for the sound it makes.
- greenhorn.** A raw, inexperienced person. See *tenderfoot*.
- grizzly bear.** A large powerful bear found in the western parts of North America.
- ground hog.** The woodchuck, a heavy-bodied American marmot.
- ground hog day.** February 2nd; Candlemas Day. If the ground hog, emerging from his hole, sees his shadow, he is said to return for another six weeks of sleep during which the weather will be unpleasant.
- grubstake.** Supplies or equipment needed by a prospector and furnished on promise of a share (*stake*) in his finds.
- gulch.** A ravine or canyon; the deep and narrow bed of a torrent or stream.
- gusher.** An oil or gas well that flows profusely (*gushes*) without pumping.
- hackamore.** Spanish *jaquima*: "a halter."
- harvester.** Machine used in harvesting a crop.
- haywire.** Colloquial for confused, muddled, crazy. From the odd shapes of discarded baling wire.
- hobble.** To apply connected leather cuffs to the forelegs of a horse to keep it from wandering too far away.
- hog-tie.** To tie the two hind-legs and a front leg of an animal after it has been thrown.
- hog wallow.** A muddy place (1829).
- homestead.** To take up or settle on land in accordance with the homestead law.
- honky-tonk.** A low dance-hall or saloon.
- house-raising.** A community gathering for assisting a neighbor to erect a house (1704).
- huckleberry.** Fruit or berry of a species of shrub (*Gaylussacia*) (1685).
- irrigation.** The supplying of water by means of a series of ditches.

- jack-in-the-pulpit.** An American lily-like plant, so called because it bears some resemblance to a person standing in a pulpit. By extension means "an upstart."
- jack rabbit.** A variety of long-legged, long-eared hare found in the West and Southwest (1870).
- jerky.** Mexican-Indian *charqui*: "dried beef."
- katydid.** A large green insect named for the sound made by the male of the species in summer and fall (1784).
- keno!** An exclamation meaning "All right!" From *keno*, the gambling game.
- land office.** Office where business concerning public land is transacted (1691). *A land office business* means "extensive and rapid business," probably from the rush on the land offices when the West was opened to homesteaders.
- landslide.** The slipping of an embankment or of a mass of earth and rocks off a hill or mountainside. By extension, a victory by a wide margin, particularly in a political contest.
- lariat.** Spanish *la reata*. A rope, originally for picketing animals, used as a lasso.
- lasso.** Spanish from Portuguese *laço*: "snare." A long rope with a running-noose.
- last round-up.** A name for death, used by cowboys.
- lightning bug.** The firefly (1778).
- log cabin.** A cabin built of logs (1770).
- long-horn.** A breed of cattle in Texas and the West, of Spanish derivation. Now nearly extinct.
- maple sugar.** Sugar obtained by evaporating the sap of certain maples.
- maverick.** An unbranded calf, cow, or steer. Colloquially, a lone wolf, one who is free to act as he pleases. Named for a Texas cattle owner, Samuel A. Maverick, who did not brand his cattle.
- mocking-bird.** An American bird given to mimicry (1676).

- mowing machine.** Machine that mows grass, alfalfa, and the like.
- mudhen.** An American marsh bird (1813). Colloquially, a female speculator in stocks (1876).
- mustang.** Spanish *mesteño*: "strayed, wild." A small hardy horse, half-wild, found in the Southwest.
- nester.** A squatter, (*q.v.*)
- old-timer.** One long resident in a section.
- pack rat.** Also called a *trade rat*. A western rat which leaves something in place of what it carries off.
- pasture.** Grassy land used for grazing; large fenced-in part of the cattle range.
- patch.** A plot of farm land or a small cultivated field (1653).
- peanut.** Nut-like seed of a Brazilian plant, *Arachis hypogaea*. Used colloquially to refer to small size generally.
- poison-ivy.** A vine-like sumach.
- poncho.** A blanket with a hole through which the head is thrust. The name is now applied as well to a rubber garment of the same style.
- posse.** Short for the Latin *posse comitatus* ("to have power in a country"). Organized band of men who pursue law-breakers.
- potato bug.** The *potato fly*; a soft-bodied beetle injurious to potatoes.
- ranch.** Establishment devoted to the breeding and raising of livestock. Loosely used as the Western equivalent of *farm*.
- range.** Open cattle country devoted to grazing.
- rattlesnake.** An American pit viper, so named for the rattling sound made by the shaking of the horny joints at the end of the tail (1630).
- rawhide.** Untanned hide of a cow or steer, used in a variety of ways. Also, a whip made of this.
- road-agent.** A robber of stage-coaches.

- rodeo.** Early meaning: a round-up (*q.v.*). Later meaning: a cowboy contest.
- rolling.** Undulating, as applied to land; resembling the swell of the ocean (1804).
- roping.** The catching of animals with a lasso.
- round-up.** The spring and fall gathering of cattle, especially in the days before fences were common in the West.
- rustler.** A lively industrious person (1872). Later, a cattle thief. *Rustle* is said to be a blend of *rush* and *hustle*.
- sage brush.** A species of wild plant (*Artemisia*).
- salt-lick.** A place where animals lick the earth for impregnated saline particles (1751).
- six-gun.** Or *six-shooter*. Colloquial for a revolver firing six shots without reloading.
- slippery elm.** A variety of red elm having a fragrant, mucilaginous inner bark (1748). Sometimes prepared for chewing.
- squatter.** One settling on land to which he has no legal title; especially one holding a sheep run.
- swamp.** A tract of low-lying land, often marshy (1624).
- sweet potato.** The farinaceous root of a vine, valued as food. Also a crude musical instrument which resembles the plant in shape.
- tenderfoot.** Inexperienced or young person. A newcomer in a rough or newly settled region, especially in the West.
- ten-gallon hat.** A large broad-brimmed hat worn by cowboys.
- timothy.** A meadow grass valued for forage. Named for an early grower of this grass, Timothy Hanson (1747).
- tinhorn.** Slang for one who gambles with low stakes and who pretends to be expert without actually being so.
- water moccasin.** A pit viper, found in the South (1821).
- whippoorwill.** A nocturnal bird, so named from its call (1709).

HOUSEHOLD TERMS

- apple-butter.** A preserve of spiced apple-juice and pulp, of a butter-like consistency.
- applejack.** An American brandy distilled from cider (1816).
- barbecue.** To roast or broil a whole animal slowly over an open fire (1702).
- bee.** Noun of obscure origin: a meeting of neighbors for the purpose of accomplishing some task in common. There were many kinds, including *apple, husking, logging, quilting*, and *spelling bees*.
- bloomers.** A female costume named for Mrs. Amelia Bloomer (1818-1894) of Seneca Falls, N.Y. Short baggy trousers of lightweight material, often worn by women in sports activities.
- bobby pin.** A small, slightly curved hairpin made of two flat strips of metal, often corrugated. First used in the 1920s when *bobbed* hair became fashionable.
- boiled dinner.** A dinner of boiled or corned beef and boiled vegetables, usually potatoes, cabbage, turnips, beets, and carrots. Popular in New England; often called *New England boiled dinner*.
- bourbon.** A kind of whisky made originally in Bourbon County, Kentucky.
- breadstuff.** Cereal, flour, meal, and the like, out of which bread is made; also bread of all kinds (1793).
- broomstick skirt.** A very full short cotton skirt wrapped and tied around a broomstick while wet to produce an accordion-pleated effect when dried. The idea was borrowed from the Navajo Indians.
- brownstone.** Various kinds of brown sandstone used as a building material. The term is applied to a type of dwelling popular in the East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

bundle. To occupy the same bed without undressing; said of a man and woman especially during courtship (1781). The custom is said to have prevailed in the East in Colonial times.

catchall. A box, bag, closet, or nook used as a receptacle for various articles.

cereal. Used as a noun to mean "breakfast food."

chewing gum. A preparation of flavored chicle gum.

chipped beef. Beef smoked and cut in very thin slices.

clapboard. A riven board, often thinner at one edge, used in house-building (1637).

coal oil. Petroleum, especially kerosene.

cocktail. A mixed drink composed of spirit, sugar, bitters, etc. (1806).

cologne. Short for *eau de cologne*, a toilet water composed of alcohol and aromatic oils (1832).

compact. A small vanity box or case for the purse, containing rouge and face powder, equipped with a small mirror.

console radio. Radio placed in a cabinet, often decorated, and designed to be placed against a wall.

corncob. The axis on which the grains of the Indian corn grow. Also, a pipe, the bowl of which is made of a piece of corncob.

corndodgers. Often called simply *dodgers*. Small cakes of bread made from Indian cornmeal and baked hard (1831).

corn-popper. A utensil in which corn is held over a fire to roast or *pop*.

cornstarch. Starch made from pulverized Indian corn.

corn whisky. Whisky made from Indian corn.

cottage cheese. A form of cheese made of milk curd, with butter and salt, called also *smear case* or *Dutch cheese*.

cotton batting. Carded cotton in the form of a thin roll or sheet.

- crazy quilt.** A quilt covered with irregular patchwork.
- culottes.** French for *breeches*. A term for a divided skirt.
- cupcake.** A cake baked in a muffin pan or in cups.
- davenport.** An upholstered sofa which may be converted into a bed. Possibly called after the name of an early maker.
- daybed.** Also *studio couch*. A bed without a headrest used as a sofa during the day.
- derby.** A stiff felt hat with a dome-shaped crown and a narrow stiff brim, which the English call a *bowler*.
- dish rag.** A dish cloth, used in washing dishes.
- dressing.** Sauce and seasoning added to certain dishes such as salads.
- dumbwaiter.** A small elevator operated by a rope for conveying food from one floor to another. In apartment houses it is used to collect garbage and refuse.
- duster.** A light overgarment to protect clothing from dust; often of linen. Also a device for sprinkling dust.
- dust pan.** A shovel-shaped device with a handle, used to receive dust when the floor is being swept (1785).
- ear muff.** A covering for the ears as protection from the cold.
- egg-beater.** An instrument for whipping the yolk or white of an egg after it is removed from the shell. The English *egg-whisk*.
- eggnog.** A drink consisting of beaten eggs, milk, sugar, and rum, wine, or other spirits (1775).
- faucet.** A water tap (1841).
- frolic.** See *bee*.
- frozen foods.** Foods frozen quickly and preserved in special refrigerators for later use.
- fudge.** A kind of soft candy.
- Governor Winthrop desk.** A style of desk with an oxbow or reversed serpentine front. Designed later than but named for Gov. John Winthrop (1588-1649) of Massachusetts Colony.

- grapefruit.** Pale yellow citrus fruit found in subtropical regions.
- hall tree.** An upright stand with pegs or hooks on which hats, coats, and the like are hung.
- halter.** In women's dress, a style of support for the bodice in which the straps pass behind the neck rather than over the shoulders. Used in some bathing suits, playsuits, and evening dresses.
- hard cider.** A potent cider that has been allowed to ferment.
- hooked rug.** A rug made by looping strips of cloth and the like through burlap.
- hoop skirt.** A skirt or petticoat expanded and held out by hoops.
- ice cream.** Smooth creamy frozen confection, variously prepared and flavored (1744).
- jerked beef.** Beef cured by the process of jerking. See *jerky*, page 151.
- jigger.** A small measuring glass holding about two ounces, used in measuring liquor (1836).
- johnny cake.** Corn bread (1739).
- knickerbockers.** (1) New Yorkers. Named for Diedrich Knickerbocker, pretended author of Washington Irving's *A History of New York* (1809). (2) Short, loosely fitting trousers gathered at the knee. Later clipped to *knickers*.
- lightning rod.** A grounded copper rod used as a protection for buildings against lightning (1789).
- linoleum.** Floor covering made originally of solidified linseed oil on a burlap or canvas backing.
- linsey-woolsey.** A strong coarse fabric having a linen warp and a woolen woof.
- living room.** A family sitting room (1857).
- mint julep.** Iced and sweetened drink of whisky or brandy, mixed with fresh mint (1809).

- mission furniture.** Plain dark heavy furniture with straight lines and square sections, resembling that of the early Spanish missions in California.
- molasses.** Sweet syrup prepared by boiling down various vegetable juices or saps, especially that of sugar cane (1666).
- moonshine whisky.** Whisky made usually in remote communities by individuals having no license for distilling. Probably so called because the distilling was done secretly at night.
- mush.** Porridge (1671).
- overalls.** Work trousers (1776).
- overcoat.** A greatcoat or coat worn over a suit, especially in cold weather (1807).
- overshoe.** Shoe or shoe-like covering, for protection against mud and the like.
- pandowdy.** A deep apple pie or pudding seasoned with molasses (1830).
- pastrami.** Highly seasoned smoked beef. The word is of Hungarian origin.
- peach brandy.** A spirituous liquor made from the juice of peaches.
- pie.** Baked dish made of fruit, vegetables, or meat, inclosed or partially inclosed in pastry (1676).
- pone.** From the Algonquian; a patty or cake of corn or wheat bread. Called *corn pone* in 1612.
- popcorn.** Corn that has been *popped* or roasted. Small-eared Indian corn.
- porterhouse steak.** Choice beefsteak cut from the loin next to the sirloin. A *porterhouse* was a tavern selling such malt liquors as porter and ale. The steak is said to be so called because it was made popular by the proprietor of a New York porterhouse.
- roasting ear.** Ear of Indian corn suitable for roasting.
- rubbers.** Rubber overshoes (1842).

- salt-rising.** Leaven made of a salted batter used in bread-making.
- scrapple.** A food made by boiling together scraps of pork with chopped herbs and cornmeal. After it has set, it is often sliced and fried.
- shore dinner.** A sea-food dinner, often eaten at a seashore place.
- shortcake.** Cake made with plenty of shortening, often of biscuit dough (1820).
- slacks.** Informal trousers worn by men and women. The term was once military slang for trousers worn without puttees.
- slip covers.** Upholstered removable covers for overstuffed chairs and couches.
- spruce beer.** Beer made by boiling leaves and small branches of spruce fir with sugar and molasses (1766).
- studio couch.** See *day bed*.
- succotash.** Indian, meaning "ear of corn." A dish of corn and beans boiled with or without salt.
- sugar-cured.** Of ham and pork prepared with the use of sugar.
- sugarhouse.** Shed in which maple sap is boiled (1725).
- sunbonnet.** Bonnet with an extended projection in front and a flounce or cape behind, worn by women (1824).
- sweet corn.** Indian corn in the milk or roasting ear stage (1646).
- trench coat.** A lined waterproof overcoat, resembling those originally worn by soldiers in the trenches.
- vanity.** (1) Short for *vanity case* or *box*. See *compact*. (2) Short for *vanity table* or *vanity dresser*, a woman's dressing-table with mirror.
- Venetian blind.** A blind made of many thin parallel slats (of wood or metal) that can be set simultaneously at any desired angle.

- waffle.** From the Dutch. A crisp cake like a pancake baked in a waffle iron, or pair of griddles hinged together.
- weather strip.** A strip of metal or wood placed at the edge of a window or door casing to keep out cold air.
- zipper.** Originally a trade-name for a rubber and fabric boot equipped with a slide fastener. Now, *zipper* refers to any slide fastening device used on clothing, bags, pocket-books, and the like.

NAUTICAL TERMS

- A-1.** First-class; from insurance rating of British naval vessels.
- aboveboard.** In nautical usage means "above the water line"; by extension means "fair, frank, open-dealing."
- Act of God.** A marine insurance term, referring to causes beyond human control; for example, a tornado.
- afoul.** Entangled or in collision; by extension, to be mixed up with.
- aground.** *To run aground* means "to meet with some disaster."
- aloof.** From the Dutch *to loef*: "to windward." No longer used at sea. On shore it occurs in such an expression as *holding aloof*, meaning "indifferent in manner, distant."
- anchor.** Instrument used to keep a boat stationary. Extended to refer to any object or person who stabilizes.
- arrive.** From Latin *ad ripare*: "to come on shore." Now applied to trains and the like as well as to ships.
- away.** Loose; in motion. Not to be confused with *aweigh*, off the bottom. See *way*.
- back and fill.** A complicated maneuver at sea; by extension means "to vacillate."
- back water.** In land usage, to retract or hedge.
- ballast.** Sand and the like used to hold a ship upright; by extension, stability, good judgment.

- beachcomber.** Originally, a runaway sailor; now, an unemployed person or idler, especially a white person in a non-white region.
- beacon.** At sea, a mark to warn of a rock or shoal; on land, often used figuratively to mean "a person or thing serving as a conspicuous indication."
- beam.** Width of a vessel; by extension, is applied to persons as in the facetious expression *broad of beam*.
- beam-ends, on the.** Of a ship, careened at a sharp angle; otherwise, at the end of one's financial resources.
- bear.** To lie in a given direction from a vessel. From this term several expressions have developed, for example: *bear upon*, have relation to; *bear to* (right, left), change course in direction of; *bear down*, be severe.
- bearings.** In navigation means "position"; by extension, *to get one's bearings* means "to become oriented."
- berth.** Convenient sea-room, as in the expression *give it a wide berth*. Also means "space occupied by a ship at anchor or in a dock" and "a built-in bed place or bunk."
- bilge, bilgewater.** Stagnant water in a ship's bottom; by extension, unimportant or inaccurate statements.
- bitter end, to the.** The last extremity. At sea the expression refers to the anchor's being let out to the end of the cable attached to windlass-bitts.
- blow over.** Of the weather, to clear; by extension, to become forgotten, to lose its importance.
- board, go by the.** At sea, when masts and spars are broken off and swept over the side; by extension, to be completely ruined; a total loss.
- boats, burn one's.** To take a course from which there can be no retreat.
- booby-hatch.** Shore slang for hospital for the insane. See *hatch*.

boom. Period of prosperity; perhaps from a ship's *booming along*; that is, with studding sails set beyond the yard-arm for added speed.

break out. Bring up from the hold; by extension, to bring something into service for the first time.

broadside. The firing of all guns on one side of a ship at once; by extension, a vigorous argument, as in a newspaper.

bulwarks. Sides of a ship above deck level; in shore language, a strong defense.

by and large. Originally a sea expression meaning "sailing with a fair or leading wind."

cast about. At sea, to try different courses when the ship's position is doubtful; by extension, to grope; to try to find a way out of a dilemma.

clean sweep, make a. Get rid of everything; start afresh. From the sea reference to movable articles being washed overboard.

clear, in the. At sea, means "not entangled"; on shore, means "free from blame; unobstructed."

coast is clear, the. No fear of interruption. From the nautical reference to a blockading squadron.

colors. Flag of the country from which a ship hails. Used in such expressions as *with flying colors* and *show one's true colors*.

crank, cranky. Originally applied to a ship that was hard to handle; by extension, irritable, quarrelsome.

crew. At sea, the foremast hands; used in various expressions on land, such as *work crew*, *train crew*.

Davy Jones' locker. *To be sent to Davy Jones' locker* is to drown or be buried at sea. The name Davy Jones, sometimes rendered "Duffy Jonah" or "Duppy Jonah," is derived from the Bantu (West African) word *dupe* meaning "ghost," and is a term for spirit of the sea or sea-devil.

- doldrums.** Belt of calm, rainy weather at the equator; by extension, low spirits, the dumps.
- Dutch courage.** Liquor. Sailors always believed it was served in the Dutch navy before a battle.
- embark upon.** To take ship; by extension, to start an enterprise.
- figurehead.** A carved figure at a ship's bow. Used generally to mean "a person nominally holding an important position but actually having little power."
- fleet.** A group of vessels under one control. Now used of trucks, cars, airplanes, and the like, as well as of ships.
- forge ahead.** Originally, *force ahead*, meaning "to gather headway or to outsail another vessel."
- governor.** Latin *gubernator*. Originally, a ship's helmsman. Now an automatic device for controlling speed.
- graveled, to be.** Of ships, to be stranded; by extension, to be stumped.
- gunny sack.** From East Indian *gunni*, a coarse cloth of jute brought home by sailors.
- hail from.** To come from (a place); a ship *hails from* her port of registry.
- half-seas over.** Partly intoxicated.
- hand.** Workman; originally a sea term. *All hands* means "the ship's company."
- hard up.** At sea, a term meaning "with rudder over as far as it will go." Colloquial for penniless.
- hatch.** On ships, entrance to the hold; on shore, a trapdoor, mouth, or stomach, as in *down the hatch*, a drinking expression.
- haul.** Originally, a catch of fish; now often used in the sense of loot or profit.
- haze.** *Hazing*, as in college activities, derives from the nautical term meaning "to knock about, bully."
- head for.** To steer on a definite course; often to head ashore.

high and dry. Deserted; powerless. From the nautical term meaning "aground."

irons. Handcuffs.

jettison. To throw the cargo overboard to save the ship.

keel. The central timbers on the bottom of a ship. Used in the expressions *keel over*, fall in a faint; *on even keel*, steady.

kink. From the Dutch; a sailor's word for a twist in a line.

lading, bill of. Originally, the term for a cargo list, now used for overland freight as well.

lingo. From *lingua franca*; a sailor's term for jargon.

mainstay. Chief support or reliance, from the nautical term for the principal rope in the rigging.

oar in, put one's. To intervene without being asked.

off and on. Now and then, from the reference to a ship's tacking.

plain sailing. A corruption of *plane* sailing; that is, sailing by chart, not by dead reckoning.

press into service. To utilize or adapt, from the eighteenth century press gangs who kidnaped men for service on warships.

reckoning, dead. Guess or intuition, probably earlier *deduced* reckoning, calculation of the ship's position.

reel off. To tell rapidly or fluently. The *reel* of the log, or instrument for measuring speed, gave off a humming note when the ship was going fast.

roustabout. A common laborer, originally a deck hand on a river steamer.

scuttle butt. On early ships, the *scuttle butt* was a cask of drinking water. In modern slang, rumor or gossip.

shanghai. To kidnap, from the earlier practice of kidnaping drugged or drunken men to serve as sailors, possibly on ships bound for the Orient.

shipshape. In first-class order or condition.

- skylark.** To chase one another up the rigging. Now has the meaning of "to frolic."
- stow.** From the Dutch: "to pack cargo into a ship." Now used generally to mean "to pack compactly."
- stranded.** Nautically, means "driven onto a strand or ground." Now used to mean "penniless or friendless."
- supercargo.** From Spanish *sobrecargo*. A business agent on a voyage who represents the owners.
- swamped.** Of a boat, filled with water. Now used generally to mean "overburdened."
- tack, on the wrong.** On the wrong course.
- three sheets in the wind.** Intoxicated.
- typhoon.** From the Chinese *tai-fung*: "a cyclical storm."
- way.** Ship's progress through the water. A vessel gets *under way* (not *under weigh*).
- yarn, spin a.** To tell a story; chat aimlessly. From two sailors making spun yarn from untwisted yarns of rope, talking as they work.

TRANSPORTATION TERMS

- auto court.** A tourist camp equipped with small cottages and other accommodations for motorists wishing to stay overnight.
- bandwagon.** A large, high wagon usually ornamented, with a deck to seat bandmen; a circus wagon. Also, an imaginary vehicle carrying leaders whose candidate or cause has attracted favorable support among the populace. Hence *to get on the bandwagon* is colloquial for to go along with popular sentiment.
- box-car.** Railroad car for carrying freight, resembling a huge box.
- bumper.** A device placed at the ends of a railroad car or automobile to lessen the shock of impact.
- clover leaf.** An intricate intersection of highways resembling the clover leaf in outline.

- commuter.** Usually one who makes daily trips to and from a city using a *commutation ticket*, or ticket issued at a reduced rate for a certain number of trips.
- conductor.** One in charge of a public conveyance such as a railroad train or a streetcar.
- Conestoga wagon.** A covered wagon with broad wheels much used in western travel during the eighteenth century. The name is derived from that of an Iroquois tribe in Pennsylvania. Compare *stogie*.
- covered wagon.** A general term for small or large wagons provided with canvas covers. Compare *prairie schooner*.
- coupé.** A two-door automobile, usually seating two to five persons. The name is from the French past participle meaning "cut." Pronounced *kōō pā'*; often incorrectly *kōōp*.
- cow catcher.** A strong inclined frame on the front of a locomotive. In earlier times, it was often called a *horse catcher*. It was designed to catch or thrust aside cattle or other obstructions on railroad tracks.
- cunarder.** One of a class of ocean steamships run by the Cunard Line, named for Sir Samuel Cunard (1787-1865).
- curricule.** From the Latin *curriculum*: "race course chariot." A two-wheeled carriage drawn by two horses abreast. It was one of the most fashionable town carriages in the nineteenth century.
- cutter.** A light one-horse sleigh used in town and country in earlier times (1804). Compare the word *cutter* in the list of Nautical Terms.
- cycler.** A bicycle-rider.
- day coach.** Or simply *coach*. A railroad car without berths or special accommodations; equivalent to the European third class carriages.
- dining car.** A railroad car or coach in which passengers may secure meals. It is also called a *diner*, a term also used

to refer to any small lunchroom or restaurant resembling a dining car in general appearance.

dugout. Originally, a canoe made from a hollowed-out tree trunk. See also the word *dugout* in the lists of Sports Terms and War Terms in the next chapter.

elevated railroad. A street railroad supported on trestlework. Familiarly known as the *elevated* or the "L" in New York City (1868).

express. Rapid conveyance of merchandise or baggage by companies organized for that purpose. Also a type of public conveyance that makes few stops.

expressman. Employee of an express company.

fast-freight. Freight train conveying freight that is expedited more rapidly than ordinary freight.

filling station. A retail station that sells gasoline, oil, and automotive accessories.

flag station. A railroad station at which trains stop only when *flagged* or signaled.

flatboat. A shallow rectangular boat for use in river traffic (1689).

flatcar. A railroad platform car used for transporting freight.

flivver. American slang for a small inexpensive automobile, especially an old or dilapidated Ford.

free on board. Said of goods or freight delivered free of charge on a train or vessel. Usually abbreviated F.O.B. as in *F.O.B. Chicago*.

freight. In American usage, goods carried by rail as well as by sea. The British call a *freight train* a *goods train*.

gas. Colloquial for *gasoline*. The British prefer the term *petrol*.

gondola. A light riverboat. Also a railroad freight car with low sides and no top, for hauling coal and the like.

handcar. A small, light car capable of being propelled along a railroad track by hand, used mostly by railroad laborers.

- herdic.** A low-hung cab with side-seats and an entrance at the back; named for the inventor, Peter Herdic (1882).
- hit-and-run driver.** A driver who does not stop after his vehicle has collided with a pedestrian or another vehicle.
- hitchhike.** Colloquial for to pick up rides in passing automobiles.
- horse car.** Streetcar or railroad car drawn by a horse or horses. Also a car equipped to transport horses.
- hurricane deck.** Upper deck of a river steamer; the weather deck.
- interurban.** Connecting cities or towns, especially in reference to an electric railroad.
- jalopy.** Slang for a dilapidated automobile; more recent than *flivver*.
- jumping-off place.** Place at the end of one portion of a journey. Also the farthest limit of anything settled or civilized.
- lane.** Part of a larger road. The expression *six-lane highway* means that such a highway is wide enough to permit automobiles to travel three abreast in each direction.
- limited.** Term used for certain fast railroad trains that often require an extra fare.
- lizzie.** Slang for a dilapidated automobile, especially an ancient Ford. The term *tin lizzie* is also common.
- locate.** To settle; to take up residence.
- mail coach.** A mail car; a railroad car in which mail is carried.
- Model-T.** Name for an early Ford car.
- motel.** A motorist's hotel, usually an auto court (*q.v.*).
- motor.** To ride in or travel by an automobile.
- motorman.** The driver of a streetcar.
- mule skinner.** A mule-driver; a freighter who drives with mules.
- national road.** Highway built by or with the assistance of the Federal Government.

- pack.** To carry goods and the like on the back.
- pack horse.** A horse used as a pack animal.
- palace car.** A railroad passenger car fitted with superior accommodations, especially a sleeping car.
- parlor car.** A railroad passenger car fitted with individual chairs, sofas, etc.; a chair car.
- pony express.** Rapid mail service, 1860-1861, using relays of ponies, from Missouri to California.
- portage.** Carrying or transportation of canoes and goods overland from one stretch of navigable water to another (1698).
- post road.** Road over which mail-carriers travel or used to travel.
- prairie schooner.** Large canvas-covered wagon used on the western prairies (1845).
- prowl car.** A police patrol car, usually equipped with a radio.
- Pullman.** Railroad passenger car, especially a sleeping car. Named for George M. Pullman, its designer.
- rattler.** Slang for a railroad train.
- ride the rods.** To travel illegally on a freight train. Rods are the understructure of the train, on which vagrants ride.
- right of way.** (1) Land occupied by a railroad; the strip of land over which a public road is built. (2) Customary precedence in passing accorded by one vehicle to another.
- road agent.** Term for a highwayman in the West, especially in earlier days.
- road hog.** Slang for a driver who is indifferent to the rights of other motorists and who encroaches upon the traffic lane used by another.
- roadster.** Formerly a bicycle; now an automobile with an open body, single seat, and luggage compartment or rumble seat.
- round trip.** A complete trip to and from a destination.
- rumble seat.** A seat in the rear of a roadster, the backrest of which forms a cover, when closed.

- sedan.** An enclosed automobile seating four to seven persons. The first cars of this type were modeled roughly after the Sedan chair.
- shay.** A chaise (1717). From French *chaise*, mistaken for a plural.
- ship canal.** Canal through which ships may pass.
- shuttle.** Short for *shuttle train*. A train running back and forth over a short route; for example, between Grand Central and Times Square in the New York subway system.
- siding.** A short sidetrack connected with a main railroad track.
- sled.** Vehicle on runners used on snow or ice (1686).
- sleeper.** A sleeping-car (1839).
- stagecoach.** Coach carrying passengers, mail, baggage, from one town to another according to schedule. Often called a stage.
- stanchion.** An upright column, by the side of a road, supporting traffic lights or other traffic indications.
- star route.** A special mail route contracted for by the Post Office Department. Designated by an asterisk in the *Postal Guide*.
- station agent.** Or *ticket agent*. Agent in charge of a railroad station.
- station wagon.** An automobile, usually with a wooden body, designed to carry passengers and goods, much used in suburban areas. In some parts of the country it is called a *beach wagon*.
- streetcar.** Public conveyance for passengers, running on rails through the streets. The English *tram car*.
- street railway.** The tracks and other equipment of a company operating streetcars.
- subway.** Formerly an underground passage. Now a tunnel for a metropolitan railway operating underground.

- sulky.** A light, two-wheeled carriage seating one person. Used in trotting races.
- Sunday driver.** Contemptuous expression for a careless or inexperienced driver, so called because it is assumed he drives only on week-ends.
- superhighway.** A restricted highway designed for motorists traveling at high speeds over long distances.
- surrey.** A four-wheeled two-seated pleasure carriage, named for *Surrey*, England.
- switchback.** A railroad track following a zig-zag course to lessen the grade up a hill.
- thumb a ride.** Expression used by hitchhikers meaning "to request a ride from a passing motorist by pointing up the road with the thumb."
- ticket.** A slip of paper or cardboard received in exchange for a railroad or bus fare. Also, a colloquial term for a summons received for a traffic violation.
- toboggan.** Canadian French from Algonquian. A long, light sled made of thin boards curved up at one end, with a low handrail along the sides (1629).
- tourist camp.** An area equipped to accommodate tourists by providing camping space, small cottages, drinking water, and the like.
- tourist home.** A private house catering to overnight guests such as tourists and other transients.
- traffic circle.** A place where two highways cross, especially designed to avoid collisions.
- traffic island.** A raised or marked-off section of a street for the use of pedestrians waiting for streetcars or buses.
- trailer.** (1) Any small vehicle towed by another. (2) Short for *trailer house*, a two-wheeled vehicle towed by an automobile, fitted up for sleeping and dining purposes, and used by tourists.
- transfer.** A ticket given on streetcars or buses, entitling the holder to continue his trip on another route.

- trolley car.** Electric tram; streetcar. Named for the trolley wire from which the car derives its power.
- tugboat.** A small, sturdy steam or power vessel used for towing.
- turnpike.** Road originally maintained by an agency which collected tolls.
- turnstile.** An upright post with four arms through which a person passes by turning the arms. Used today in subways and elsewhere to collect fares and to register the number of persons passing through.
- underpass.** A passageway for highway traffic under a railway.
- whistle stop.** Term for a small railroad station at which a train does not regularly stop. Used also to refer to the town in which the station is located.

SHOPKEEPING TERMS

- accountant.** A professional keeper or inspector of accounts (1656).
- adventurer.** One who engages or shares in a commercial enterprise (1608). Now a person who engages in a risky or "shady" enterprise.
- advertisement.** Public notice or announcement, usually in a newspaper or periodical (1704).
- appreciate.** To rise in value.
- auction sale.** Sale by auction or public sale to the highest bidder.
- bargain counter.** Counter in a store at which goods are displayed or sold at reduced prices.
- barroom.** A room where liquors are kept ready to be drawn and sold at a counter. The English *tap-room* or *bar*.
- bartender.** A barkeeper; barman.
- bill of goods.** An order for merchandise. Colloquially, *to be sold a bill of goods* means "to be duped or cheated" or "to be convinced against one's will."

- bookstore.** Store or shop where books are sold.
- bootblack.** One who blacks and polishes shoes (1817).
- candy store.** A shop which sells candy, ice cream, and confectionery. The term is also used to refer to a shop which sells, in addition, many other items, including newspapers, books, stationery, toys, tobacco, etc.
- cash register.** A mechanism which records the amount of a sale and in which cash may be kept temporarily. Often shortened to *register*.
- chain store.** One of a number of stores owned by a single person or firm.
- chamber of commerce.** An organization of business men (1768).
- cigar store.** A shop specializing in the sale of cigars and smoking accessories.
- crossroads store.** A store situated at a place where two roads cross.
- cut rate.** A price, fare, or rate reduced below the standard charge.
- department store.** Store which keeps a variety of goods grouped into various departments.
- dickering.** Bargaining, swapping, petty trafficking (1802).
- drug store.** A pharmacy; more recently, a shop which purveys soft drinks, photographic supplies, and the like, as well as drugs.
- drummer.** One who *drums up* trade; specifically, a traveling salesman who visits retailers (1830).
- dry-goods store.** A store specializing in the various kinds of merchandise known as dry goods, especially textile fabrics.
- emporium.** Grandiloquently applied to a shop or store.
- five-and-ten.** A store selling goods at retail for five and ten cents. This type of store was founded by Frank W. Woolworth in 1879.
- floorwalker.** An overseer or supervisor in a retail store.

- fly by night.** Literally, given to escaping one's creditors at night. Applied colloquially to any insecurely financed business firm.
- free lunch.** Food given without charge, especially in a saloon, to encourage purchase of drinks.
- general store.** A store keeping a varied assortment of goods, such as hardware, dry goods, etc.
- hardware store.** Store in which ware made of iron or other metal is sold (1789).
- hash-house.** Slang for "restaurant" (1875).
- loft.** One of the upper floors of a business building, especially one without partitions.
- mail-order.** An order for merchandise, sent to a business house by mail. Attributively, as in *mail-order catalogue*.
- mark-up.** The difference between the cost price of an article and its selling price.
- notion.** A small useful article sold at a *notions counter* or in a *notions store*.
- retail store.** Store in which goods are sold in small quantities directly to the consumer.
- saloon.** Barroom.
- supermarket.** A large retail store where customers wait on themselves.
- taxpayer.** A one-story building used for business purposes. The term is believed to have originated from the practice of erecting such buildings temporarily in order to earn the taxes on the property.
- trading-post.** A place where barter trade with the Indians was carried on.
- tycoon.** From the Japanese *taikun*: "great lord." Colloquial for an industrial magnate.
- variety store.** A general store (*q.v.*).

TERMS FROM POLITICAL LIFE

- absentee voting.** The voting by mail of qualified persons because of illness or other sufficient reason.
- agitate.** To carry on activities designed to stir up popular feeling.
- alarmist.** A scaremonger or pessimist; one who needlessly excites alarms.
- alphabetical agency.** A popular term for one of the many administrative boards or agencies often known by the initial letters of their names.
- bill of rights.** The guaranteed fundamental rights and privileges of the people, especially the first ten amendments to the Constitution.
- bloc.** A group of Congressmen who generally vote the same way on certain issues. Blocs often cross party lines.
- boondoggling.** A popular term used to describe expenditure of public funds on useless public works. From *boondoggie*, a handicraft article of slight utility.
- boring from within.** The tactics of hostile persons, outwardly allied to a group, for the purpose of weakening its program.
- brain trust.** A popular term for a group of experts associated with F. D. Roosevelt first in the campaign of 1932; since extended to mean any group of experts.
- bureaucracy.** Government dominated by permanent administrative agencies (bureaus).
- cloture.** In parliamentary practice, a method of ending debate and securing an immediate vote. A motion "that the question be put" is made.
- dark horse.** In racing, a little-known horse that wins unexpectedly. In politics, a candidate who unexpectedly wins a nomination.
- favorite son.** A political candidate for high office who is favored by the political leaders of his own state.

- fellow traveler.** A person who, though not a member of the Communist party, actively supports its program.
- first papers.** Popular term for the formal declaration of intention to become an American citizen.
- free speech.** The right of citizens to discuss public questions without governmental interference or restraint.
- fusion.** A temporary coalition of two or more political groups.
- gag law.** Law or ruling prohibiting debate or expression of opinion; legislation restricting the freedom of the press.
- gerrymander.** To divide a region into election districts in an unfair way for party purposes. The name is derived from Governor Elbridge *Gerry* + *salamander*. Gerry divided Essex County, Massachusetts, in 1812 so as to form a district shaped like a dragon.
- grass-roots.** Term popular with Republican political orators expressing the belief that party organization or policy has sprung up spontaneously and popularly.
- initiative.** The power of the electorate to introduce a new measure or piece of legislation.
- keynote speech.** The address of the temporary chairman at the opening of a national nominating convention.
- landslide.** In an election, a great majority of the votes cast.
- left wing.** The extreme radical parties in democratic states, including socialists, communists, and others with radical or progressive programs.
- lobbyist.** One who seeks to influence members of legislature in order that bills may be passed or defeated. Lobbyists frequent the lobbies or waiting-rooms of a legislative assembly.
- local option.** Determination of liquor regulations in a district by popular vote.
- machine.** A disparaging term for the active groups in a political party, usually under the power of a boss, through which the party's policies are directed, and through which its patronage is controlled for private ends.

- New Deal.** Label for the reformist social and economic policies of the administration of F. D. Roosevelt.
- off the record.** Remarks made by a political or official figure, not for publication.
- omnibus bill.** Colloquial term for a bill in legislature making a number of miscellaneous appropriations and provisions.
- party whip.** A person appointed to enforce party discipline in a legislative body.
- patronage.** The practice of awarding jobs or other favors to those who have helped one to win an election.
- platform.** Declaration of the principles and policies of government adopted by a political party.
- poll.** The casting or recording of votes. *The polls* is the preferred form in America for the place where votes are cast. As a verb, *to poll* means to enumerate, receive, and count the votes of a group of persons.
- poll tax.** A tax of so much per head, usually on male persons of a certain age, which must be paid before one can vote.
- pork barrel.** Slang for funds from the Federal Treasury appropriated for erecting buildings, improving rivers and harbors, and the like, especially when such improvements are regarded as not needed.
- preferential voting.** Marking of the first, second, third, etc. choices of a voter on an election ballot.
- primary.** Short for *primary election*: a preliminary election in which candidates in the several parties are directly nominated for office.
- purge.** Elimination of troublesome party members by various means.
- rabble rouser.** One who appeals to the emotions rather than to reason for support of his program.
- radical.** Advocate of immediate and fundamental (Latin *radix*, root) changes in government and laws.

- reactionary.** Applied to persons or ideas which favor return to a bygone order or maintenance of the status quo by opposing the work of "progressive" forces.
- recall.** The procedure by which an elected official may be removed from office by the voters.
- red.** Popular label for a socialist or communist.
- red-bait.** To accuse others of radical activity, usually on slight evidence.
- red tape.** Official routine or necessary official delay. From the tape used in tying up official papers.
- referendum.** The practice of referring measures proposed by the legislature to the voters for approval or rejection.
- reform.** Improvement by removal of faults and abuses, especially in government.
- repeater.** One who votes more than once in an election, in violation of the law.
- right wing.** Relatively conservative section of any ideological group.
- split ticket.** A voter *splits his ticket* when he votes for candidates of different parties at the same election.
- straw vote.** An unofficial poll taken to forecast the result of an election.
- subversive activity.** Organized political movements regarded by the authorities as hostile to existing institutions.
- ticket.** List of a party's candidates to be voted for at an election.
- ward heeler.** One who follows at the heels of a local political boss, canvasses for votes, and the like.
- whispering campaign.** Circulation by word of mouth of false or scandalous statements, especially about candidates for election.
- write-in.** A vote for a candidate whose name is not printed on the official ballot.

TERMS FROM RELIGION

- Amish.** Short for the *Amish Mennonites*, a sect named for Jacob Amen, or Ammann, a seventeenth century Mennonite.
- anxious seat.** At a revival meeting, a seat, usually near the pulpit, reserved for persons concerned about their spiritual condition. Hence, *to be on the anxious seat* means "to be uncertain, nervous, or worried." Also called *anxious bench* and *mourners' bench*.
- Bay Psalm Book.** The first book printed in English in America, a psalter published at Cambridge, Mass., in 1640.
- Bible belt.** Slang for certain regions in the South, so named for the almost literal acceptance there of the events of the Bible.
- blue law.** Severe Puritanic law regulating Sabbath observance and personal habits. Said to have been first enacted in New Haven, Conn., in early Colonial days. The term is often applied to an exceptionally drastic law.
- camp meeting.** A religious revival meeting held in the open, often lasting several days.
- Chautauqua.** Series of educational or religious meetings held during the summers at Chautauqua, N.Y., or a similar series held elsewhere.
- circuit rider.** An itinerant preacher or a minister serving churches in a circuit or group of congregations in a certain district.
- go-to-meeting.** Best, as of clothing; that is, suitable for wearing in church.
- Holy Rollers.** Slang for certain revivalists, whose meetings are characterized by frenzied excitement. The original Holy Rollers are a minor sect in the United States and Canada.
- Legion of Decency.** An organization seeking to discourage the presentation of indecent or harmful motion pictures.

- mission.** (1) The sending forth of certain persons by a church to preach; a group of such persons. (2) An organization for doing charitable work among the needy and outcast.
- mourners' bench.** See *anxious seat*. A *mourner* was one who professed conviction of sin at a revival meeting.
- parochial school.** An elementary school maintained by a parish or religious group. Applies especially to the schools maintained by the Roman Catholic Church.
- Penitentes.** In New Mexico and Colorado, members of local societies, outlawed by the Roman Catholic Church, but carrying on their secret rites of flagellation and other self-inflicted cruelties nevertheless.
- prophet.** Name applied to Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church.
- revival.** (1) Period of renewed interest in religion. (2) Short for *revival meeting*, an evangelistic meeting often characterized by emotional excitement.
- Sabbath school.** See *Sunday school*.
- Sunday school.** A school held on Sundays, in connection with a church for religious instruction of the young.
- synagogue.** Local assembly of Jews organized for public worship; the building or place of assembly for such worship.

TERMS FROM EDUCATION

- academic course.** College course in classical, mathematical, or literary studies as opposed to technical, business, or professional studies.
- academic freedom.** A phrase used in reference to higher education: the right of teachers to expound their subjects without interference on the part of academic authorities or others.
- activity program.** A modern concept of education which holds that "learning by doing" is the best method of learning.

- adult education.** Education offered to those above the usual school-leaving age; for example, vocational education, Americanization classes, arts and crafts.
- advanced standing.** Status of being allowed credit towards a degree for work done at another college.
- alma mater.** Latin: "fostering mother." Term for one's college or university (1696).
- alumnus.** Graduate of a particular college or university.
- campus.** Latin: "field." The principal grounds of a university, college, or school. The term was first employed at Princeton (1774).
- class.** The students in a college or high school of the same scholastic rank, often designated by the year of graduation.
- class day.** Day of social functions before the graduation of a class.
- co-ed.** Colloquial for a woman studying at a college admitting both men and women, that is, a co-educational institution.
- commencement.** Degree-taking or prize-giving exercises at the end of the academic year (1643).
- commercial course.** A college or school course in commercial or business techniques.
- common school.** A tax-supported elementary or secondary public school.
- correspondence course.** A course of study conducted by mail.
- course.** A study or subject pursued for a certain time, or related studies leading to a degree.
- credits.** Units of academic work, usually reckoned by number. Also called "points."
- dean.** A university or college administrative officer who supervises a school, faculty, class, or either men or women students.

- diploma.** Document given by a school to certify that the prescribed requirements have been met.
- district school.** A public elementary school, generally in a less populated area, where pupils come from rather long distances.
- dormitory.** A building in which students study, sleep, and sometimes board; often clipped to *dorm*.
- elective.** A course in a high school or college which is not a required course, but which the students elect or choose themselves.
- elementary school.** A school giving instruction in the first eight grades, that is, between kindergarten and high school.
- evening school.** Or *night school*. A school held in the evening, generally for adults.
- faculty.** A body of persons comprising the president and teaching force of an educational institution.
- finals.** Short for final examinations. Also *final exams* or *end terms*.
- finishing school.** A private school for girls, stressing social and cultural accomplishments. Formerly called a *female seminary*.
- fraternity.** A national or local organization of college men, usually secret (1777). Often clipped to *frat*.
- freshman.** A first-year student.
- freshwater college.** A small or little-known college usually in the Middle West. *Freshwater* as a qualifying adjective is applied variously to suggest lack of skill or provincialism.
- grad.** Colloquial for a graduate of a high school or college.
- grade.** A mark indicating a student's achievement in a course, usually a letter or a number. Also a synonym for *class* below the high school level.
- graduate school.** University which gives courses leading to masters' and doctors' degrees.

- graduate student.** A person pursuing a post-graduate course in school or college. It usually refers to a person studying for the degrees of master or doctor.
- graduating class.** A class whose members are in the final year or term of a college or high-school course.
- grammar school.** The school above primary school and below high school (1823).
- gym.** Clipped form of "gymnasium," a building or room used for physical exercise.
- haze.** To subject a student (usually a freshman) to humiliating or embarrassing treatment (1850). Compare *haze* in the list of Nautical Terms.
- high school.** A four-year school for which eight grades are prerequisite (1824).
- honor system.** Administration of examinations without the usual supervision, those being examined having agreed not to cheat (1904).
- hooky.** *To play hooky* is to play truant.
- junior.** A third-year student in a four-year college or high school.
- junior college.** A college not offering courses beyond those of the second or sophomore year.
- junior high school.** A high school offering courses in the seventh and eighth years of elementary school and the first year of high school.
- key.** A gold, key-shaped fraternity emblem.
- kindergarten.** From the German: "children's garden." A school for children just below primary school age, in which the normal aptitude for exercise, play, observation, and the like is cultivated.
- Latin school.** Preparatory school in which Latin is taught (1651).
- little red schoolhouse.** Small country schoolhouse. A symbol of the rural schoolhouse.

- major.** The principal subject of study in which a student is required to take a certain number of courses or hours.
- math.** A clipped form of the word *mathematics*. Such clipped forms include: *bio*, biology; *chem*, chemistry; *mili sci*, military science; *poly sci*, political science; *psych*, psychology; *lit*, literature; *eco*, economics.
- medical college.** Or *medical school*. A college teaching the science of medicine.
- minor.** The subject of study second in importance to the *major (q.v.)* in which a student takes a certain number of courses.
- normal school.** A teacher-training institution. The term is a literal translation of the French *école normale*.
- nursery school.** Or *day nursery*. A school for children just below kindergarten age.
- plebe.** A member of the freshman class at the United States Military Academy at West Point.
- pledge.** Or *pledgee*. One who promises to join a fraternity and undergoes a trial period before being initiated.
- polytechnic.** Used in reference to various applied sciences. Often a school offering instruction in the applied sciences.
- pony.** Slang or colloquial for a literal translation of a text. See also *trot*.
- preparatory school.** School at which students are prepared to enter college. Is often clipped to *prep school*.
- primary school.** The first three grades of an elementary school.
- principal.** The head of an elementary or high school.
- professor.** This term is applied to college faculty members of certain rank and may have one of several qualifying words attached to it, as *assistant professor*, *associate professor*, *professor emeritus*. The word is often loosely used to refer to any teachers or skilled persons in many fields, for example, in dancing, music, medicine.

- progressive education.** That theory of education which believes in developing to the fullest the capacities of the individual, and so permits greater freedom than is countenanced by other theories.
- prom.** A class dance. Clipped form of *promenade*.
- quiz.** An oral or written examination.
- reform school.** A school for reformation of juvenile offenders.
- rush.** A general encounter or scrimmage between members of two college classes.
- rushing period.** College slang for the period during which new students are pledged to fraternities.
- school district.** An area forming a unit in the administration of the public school system.
- schoolmarm.** A variant of *schoolma'am*. Frequently has an uncomplimentary connotation when applied to a person who insists on exact observance of the rules.
- secondary school.** A high school (*q.v.*).
- senior.** Originally *senior sophister*. A fourth-year student in a four-year college or high school.
- sheepskin.** Colloquial for diploma, because it is usually of parchment.
- sophomore.** A second-year student in a four-year college or high school.
- sorority.** A national or local organization of women students in college or high school.
- theological seminary.** A divinity school training students in theology (1810).
- three r's.** Reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. Basic studies.
- trot.** Slang or colloquial for a literal translation of the text. See *pony*.
- valedictorian.** Student who delivers the valedictory oration at graduation, usually the one of highest scholastic standing.

THEATER TERMS

- angel.** Slang for a non-professional backer of a theatrical venture.
- Annie Oakley.** Annie Oakley was a circus performer; one of her feats was to shoot holes in a playing card. Thus, a free ticket, which is so indicated by the holes punched in it.
- aside.** Something spoken aside, especially a player's remarks not intended to be heard by other players.
- back drop.** A drop curtain at the rear of the stage.
- backstage.** The area in a theater behind and at the sides of the stage. In extension, refers to the professional life of the theater.
- balcony.** An interior projecting gallery in a theater, above the main floor.
- benefit.** A theatrical performance or the like, the proceeds of which are devoted to a particular person or cause.
- bit.** A small part in a play.
- blackout.** A skit in a revue, so named because the lights are cut off immediately on the final word.
- book.** Libretto of a musical or the text of a play.
- borscht circuit.** Slang for summer theatricals in the resorts in the Catskill Mountains. So named because *borscht*, a beet soup, is a favorite dish of the guests.
- box.** An enclosed space with seats, at the side or back of the orchestra or balcony.
- box-office.** The office where tickets of admission are sold. A play is said to be *box-office* when it is popular.
- Broadway.** Term for New York City theaters in general.
- buck and wing.** An American Negro clog dance.
- business.** Gestures, facial expressions, and the like used by actors.
- carriage trade.** Term for well-to-do patrons of a theater, who formerly rode to the theater in carriages.

- carry a spear.** Slang for serving as a member of a large background group on stage. The term probably arose from costume or historical plays where extra actors would generally act as soldiers and so *carry a spear*.
- cast.** To assign the parts of a play to various actors. Also, a list of the characters and the players.
- character actor.** An actor skilled in portraying older or colorful characters, in contrast to juvenile or "straight" parts.
- chorine.** Colloquial for a chorus girl.
- class.** Colloquial for a high-class audience.
- cue.** A word or other signal warning an actor to begin speaking.
- curtain call.** A call to return to the stage after an act or scene to acknowledge the applause of the audience.
- cyclorama.** A circular panorama, surrounding the spectator. Also, the curved cloth or wall forming the back of some modern stage settings.
- deadpan.** Slang for a face (*pan*) devoid of expression.
- diamond horseshoe.** The rows of boxes at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. So called because the rows form a horseshoe and because the wealthy patrons who attended wore their jewels.
- director.** The person who trains the cast of a play.
- end man.** The last man in a row of performers in a minstrel show, generally a comedian.
- Equity.** Actors' Equity Association, the actors' trade union.
- first night.** The evening of the first performance of a play; also the performance itself.
- fly.** The space over the whole stage, above the proscenium.
- get the hook.** Term from the earlier "amateur nights" at Bowery theaters, when an unsuccessful performer was pulled off the stage into the wings by a hook.

- greenroom.** Term for theater gossip. In earlier times, the greenroom was a waiting room for actors between scenes or cues.
- ham.** A bad actor.
- hand.** Colloquial for applause.
- heavy.** Colloquial for the part of the villain in a play or of a dignified and usually corpulent person.
- hit.** Colloquial for a successful play.
- hokum.** Theatrical slang for devices invariably producing a display of mirth or sentimental emotion on the part of the audience.
- hoofer.** A dancer, especially in step-dancing.
- house.** Colloquial for the audience.
- impresario.** The director of a theater or of a company. From the Italian.
- ingenue.** A youthful female performer with a pleasant voice and manner. A role which might be filled by such an actress is called an *ingenue role*.
- interlocutor.** In a minstrel show, the man in the middle of the row of performers who questions the end men, and who acts as master of ceremonies.
- intermission.** An interruption or break, as between acts of a play.
- juvenile.** A youthful male performer.
- lay an egg.** A performance is said to *lay an egg* when it is a failure.
- lead.** Short for the leading or principal part in a performance.
- legitimate theater.** Theatrical entertainment as opposed to such forms as the motion pictures, concerts, and opera. As used originally the term was more limited, referring to spoken dramas with plot, dialogue, and action, in contrast to farce and melodrama. It is believed that the term arose from the English practice of licensing theaters; licensed theaters were known as *legitimate theaters*.
- lines.** The spoken words of a part of a play.

- little theater.** Used generally to refer to the theatrical productions of amateurs and local professionals. Probably the term derives from the small size of the theaters in which these companies perform.
- loge.** A box or stall in a theater, now used almost exclusively in motion picture theaters.
- main stem.** Slang for Broadway (*q.v.*).
- marquee.** A canopy projecting over the entrance to a theater, on which the name of the play, and sometimes of the performers, is displayed.
- MC.** Master of ceremonies. Sometimes used as a verb in the form of *to emcee*.
- melodrama.** Ultimately from the Greek: "*song + drama*." Romantic and sensational drama usually with a happy ending.
- mezzanine.** A low story between two higher ones; especially the area between the balcony and the orchestra.
- minstrel show.** Entertainment by minstrels (Negroes or white men in blackface) who sing, dance, and tell jokes.
- mug.** Slang verb meaning "to overact, often with the object of drawing attention."
- notice.** A review of a play appearing in a periodical.
- off to Buffalo.** Slang for a conventional exit of two or more vaudeville dancers.
- one-night stand.** A place where a traveling show stops for one night only.
- on tour.** Said of a road company following its itinerary.
- papered house.** An audience, many members of which have been admitted free of charge on passes.
- peanut gallery.** Slang for the highest gallery in the theater.
- pit.** The space in front of the stage that is reserved for the orchestra.
- plant.** An actor who remains concealed among the audience until time to take part suddenly in the action of the play.

- première.** First public performance of a play.
- press agent.** A person employed to handle publicity for a person or an organization.
- producer.** One who finances or is in general charge of a theatrical venture.
- production number.** An act which is elaborate and showy. *Make a production number of it* means colloquially "to overdo."
- prompter.** The person whose duty it is to prompt actors during a performance, *i.e.*, to remind them when necessary of the words to be spoken next.
- property.** Or *prop.* Any stage requisite except painted scenery and costumes.
- proscenium.** The part of the stage in front of the curtain. Also the arch that frames the stage.
- repertory.** Short for *repertory theater*, a theater in which a permanent company presents a series of plays.
- revival.** A renewed performance of a play presented originally at an earlier date.
- revolving stage.** A stage with a turntable which is used to facilitate the shifting of scenes.
- revue.** Musical comedy or burlesque.
- road.** Term for the itinerary of a touring company. Also refers to theaters outside of New York City which a company might visit on a tour.
- run.** An unbroken series of performances of a play.
- scalper.** One who peddles theater tickets at higher than stated prices.
- set.** The scenery which creates the illusion of a particular locale.
- show.** A generic term covering almost any kind of theatrical performance.
- showboat.** A river boat carrying a troupe of actors and having a place where plays are performed.

- showgirl.** Term for an actress, especially one who performs in musical comedies.
- sides.** Pages on which an actor's part is written.
- single.** A vaudeville act performed by one person.
- sister act.** A vaudeville act performed by two or more women, who bill themselves as "The ——— Sisters," and who may or may not be actual sisters.
- sketch.** A short vaudeville piece.
- skit.** A comic sketch or brief bit of burlesque.
- spot.** Short for *spotlight*, a projected circle of light used to illuminate brilliantly a performer on the stage.
- S.R.O.** Standing room only.
- stage door.** The door through which the performers enter and leave the theater.
- stage fright.** Nervousness felt at appearing on the stage before an audience.
- stage hand.** One who assists the stage manager by handling scenery, lights, and properties.
- stage whisper.** A loud whisper, supposed not to be heard by the other actors but audible to the audience.
- stock.** Short for *stock company*, an organization of actors presenting a repertory.
- stooge.** A comedian's foil.
- straight man.** A stooge.
- straw-hat circuit.** Summer theaters, so called because many are located in rural places. Also known as *barnyard circuit*.
- strike.** To dismantle a set.
- strip tease.** Slang for a performance, usually in burlesque, in which a girl disrobes more or less completely in view of the audience.
- stub.** The counterfoil of a theater ticket.

- super.** Short for *supernumerary*, a person who is not a regular actor employed to appear in a group such as a mob scene. See *carry a spear*.
- tap dance.** A step dance tapped out audibly with the toes or heels.
- theater.** A building in which dramatic performances are regularly given. *Theater* also means dramatic material, especially when it is effective, as in the remark, *That's good theater*.
- ticket scalper.** See *scalper*.
- trouper.** Member of a company of traveling actors; an actor or actress.
- two on the aisle.** Familiar expression for two good seats in the orchestra.
- understudy.** An actor who is prepared to substitute for the regular performer in a role.
- unit set.** A set which is so constructed that it may be used to represent various locales in one production with but a few changes.
- upstage.** Toward the back of the stage. In early theaters, the rear was higher than the front. Colloquially, *upstage* means "snobbish or standoffish."
- vaudeville.** Theatrical entertainment consisting of singing, dancing, and the like. From the French *Vau-de-Vire*, a Norman village famous for its songs.
- walk-on.** A short part in a play, generally without lines. See *bit*.
- wing.** One of the side scenes or side pieces of scenery. Also the area at either side of the stage.

CIRCUS TERMS

- baggage stock.** Draught horses used in a circus.
- ballyhoo.** From the town Ballyhooley in Ireland. Free exhibition of a few attractions in front of a side-show to

- induce customers to purchase tickets of admission. Applied generally to any kind of sensational advertising.
- barker.** A person who delivers a "spiel" or who "barks" at the entrance to a circus or side-show. See also *grinder*.
- big top.** The main tent at a circus.
- blues.** The blue general admission tickets to a circus.
- bulls.** Term for elephants.
- callopie.** Term derived ultimately from the Greek muse of eloquence, Calliope, to denote the musical instrument forming part (often the end) of a circus parade. It consists of a series of whistles played by keys as in an organ.
- cats.** Circus term for lions and other animals of the cat family.
- double in brass.** A performer in a circus is said to *double in brass* when he plays in the band in addition to presenting an act. Said generally of any versatile person.
- fall guy.** Clown who is victimized in an act. Consequently, any dupe.
- grifter.** A professional gambler or short-change artist who follows the circuses around.
- grinder.** A ballyhoo expert who gives his "spiel" or "grind" in front of a side-show. Also a barker.
- Hey rube!** Rallying cry used when circus roustabouts are threatened by outsiders.
- joey.** Circus term for a clown.
- kinker.** Term for an acrobat.
- long-string driver.** A man in a circus who drives four, six, or eight horses at a time.
- lot.** The grounds where the circus tents are pitched.
- main guy.** Originally, the main guy rope that holds up the big top. By extension, the term has come to mean "a person of importance or a leader in a group."
- pitchman.** One who sells novelties on the circus lot or in nearby streets. A pitch is either "low" or "high," depending on whether it is conducted on the ground or from a

- wagon or car. The term is now applied to any street vendor who delivers a sales talk.
- props.** Term in the circus, as in the theater, for the equipment used in presenting an act.
- railroad show.** Term for the modern circus which travels by rail.
- razor-back.** A man of all work.
- ring stock.** Performing horses. Compare *baggage stock*.
- shillaber.** An employee who hurries to buy a ticket to a side-show as soon as the "grinder" has stopped talking, in order to encourage others to buy tickets. Often shortened to *shill*.
- side-show.** A small show as an annex to the circus; also called a *kid show*.
- steam fiddle.** Circus slang for the *calliope* (*q.v.*).
- three-ring.** Refers to a circus, the arena of which is divided into three parts.
- walk-around.** An act performed by clowns as they circle the arena.

TERMS FROM JOURNALISM

- ace.** Term for *star reporter* (*q.v.*).
- ad.** Short for advertisement.
- bank.** Term for subordinate heading of a main headline.
- beat.** Publication of a news story before competitors; also, the territory regularly assigned to a reporter. See *scoop*.
- box.** News story or feature surrounded by a line border.
- break.** News *breaks* when it passes out of the domain of private life and becomes public news.
- bulletin.** A news story just received by telegraph or teletypewriter.
- by-line.** The line at the beginning of an article giving the name of the reporter who wrote it. From the wording of such a line: "By ———"

- caption.** Explanation placed under a picture printed in a newspaper. *Caption* is also a verb.
- cartoon.** Pictorial caricature or drawing expressing an editorial opinion.
- chain.** Group of newspapers under the same ownership.
- circulation.** Total number of copies of a newspaper distributed per issue.
- city desk.** The desk or table of the city editor and his assistants who are responsible for the reporting and editing of local news.
- classified.** Brief advertisements classified in most papers under such headings as "Help Wanted," "Real-Estate," etc.
- clipping.** A newspaper item clipped out of the paper. The British prefer the term *cutting*.
- column.** A vertical section of type separated from the next by a blank space or a rule. The term *column* has also come to mean one regularly appearing under the same title, written by a special writer called a *columnist*.
- comics.** Also *comic strips*. Term for humorous or adventure cartoons appearing in many American newspapers, often on a special page.
- copy.** Manuscript or typed material to be put into print.
- copy boy.** An office boy who takes copy from the editorial department to the printing department.
- correspondent.** A person employed to send in news from a special place.
- coverage.** The process of reporting an event.
- cub.** An inexperienced reporter.
- cuts.** Engravings used in a newspaper from which pictures are printed. All illustrations are known collectively as "art."
- deadline.** The time limit when copy must be submitted.
- department.** A newspaper is organized into various departments: editorial, advertising, business, mechanical, and circulation. Each department is further subdivided. The

- mechanical department, for example, is subdivided into composing room, stereotype, press room, and engraving.
- dummy.** A pattern of the newspaper, often with blank pages, used in laying out an edition.
- edition.** One of the several issues of a newspaper for a single day.
- editor.** One of the responsible members of the editorial department: managing, city, news, night, state, or magazine editor.
- editorial.** An article giving the views of the editor or publisher. Editorials are usually grouped together on an editorial page.
- exclusive story.** A news story carried in only one newspaper.
- extra.** A special edition of a newspaper put out in addition to those regularly scheduled.
- feature.** A story or article which is not necessarily news, but which is interestingly written and sometimes illustrated.
- flash.** A brief preliminary announcement of the breaking of important news.
- gossip column.** A signed column composed of gossip and anecdotes relating to prominent and near-prominent persons.
- headline.** Line summarizing briefly, usually in bold type, the content of a news story or article following it. Often shortened to *head*.
- human interest.** News stories are called *human interest* stories if they are based on certain fundamental qualities of appeal in the structure of human nature: hero worship, conflict, rescue appeal, fame appeal, incongruity, feats of daring or danger.
- interview.** A meeting between a reporter and a person from whom he seeks information or opinion for publication.
- item.** A paragraph or short article in a newspaper.
- journalese.** Colloquial term for the language believed to be characteristic of newspaper writing.

- journalism.** The profession of writing for, managing, and editing a newspaper.
- layout.** The arrangement of type and cuts on a page.
- lead.** The opening paragraph of a news story, usually a brief summary of its contents.
- legman.** Colloquial for a reporter who is sent out to gather news, but who generally does not write it himself.
- letters department.** Subdivision which receives and sifts the letters written to the editor, and decides which ones will be published.
- lobster shift.** A working period that begins at an unusual hour, generally at midnight.
- lost and found.** The section of the paper in which advertisements are inserted referring to articles that have been lost or found.
- magazine section.** A section of the newspaper often using syndicated material such as popular articles on science or biography, articles on health, fashions, beauty culture, bridge, puzzles, and the like, sometimes including fiction.
- masthead.** A statement of the title, ownership, and subscription rates which appears in each issue of a newspaper, usually at the top of the first column of the editorial page. Also the title of the newspaper which appears at the top of the first page.
- morgue.** The department where miscellaneous material is kept on file for possible future reference.
- national advertising.** Advertising emanating from manufacturers and others who sell merchandise and services nationally.
- news agencies.** Clearing houses of news gathered from all points and distributed to newspapers subscribing to the service. Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service are the largest in America.
- newsstand.** A place, often an open-air stall, where newspapers and magazines are sold.

- news tip.** Suggestion for obtaining a news story, often telephoned to a newspaper by an outsider.
- nose for news.** The faculty of discerning news values in occurrences and actions of people.
- obit.** Short for *obituary*, a death notice, often with a biographical sketch of the deceased person.
- personal.** Short newspaper advertisement relating to a person or to personal matters.
- press conference.** Conference called by a person or an organization to give certain news to the press.
- printer's devil.** A printer's apprentice.
- publicity.** Matter which secures free space in newspapers, and the attention thus secured.
- Pulitzer prize.** Prize established by Joseph Pulitzer and awarded annually for distinguished reporting, public service, foreign or Washington correspondence, distinguished editorials and cartoons, and outstanding newspaper photography. Outstanding plays, novels, histories, poetry, and biographies are also selected.
- reporter.** One who gathers news for a newspaper.
- review.** Critical account of a book, play, moving picture, or musical event.
- rewrite.** To put into form for publication material supplied by a reporter. The completed article is referred to as a *rewrite*.
- scarehead.** A headline in extremely large type, usually of a sensational nature.
- scoop.** See *beat*.
- sections.** A newspaper may be divided into several *sections* or parts, each devoted to some special interest such as sports, society, or business.
- slot.** The center of a horseshoe type table where the city editor sits.
- star.** An expert reporter. See *ace*.

- syndicate.** Business concern selling special articles, comics, and photographs for simultaneous publication in many newspapers, usually one in a city.
- sob sister.** Derisive term applied to women reporters because they were thought to make their stories sentimental.
- sob story.** A news story in which there is a deliberately sentimental overplay of the emotional aspects.
- tabloid.** Newspaper of small format, usually with many pictures.
- take.** Long news stories are divided up into short sections or *takes*, each take being given to a different typesetter. This is done to set the material in type as quickly as possible.
- want-ad.** An advertisement inserted in a newspaper stating that one wishes employment, an employee, an article, etc.
- yellow journalism.** Sensational journalism, so called possibly from this type of journalism practiced by a newspaper which printed a cartoon series called the *Yellow Kid*.

IX

Terms from Present-Day American Activities

NEVER has there been such a rapid increase in the number of new words in the American language as in recent decades. So rapidly do our vocabularies change today that a dictionary compiled in 1936 had to make room by 1941 for almost 500 new terms that seemed to be permanent additions to the language. The reasons for the rapid increase in words are not far to seek. Science invents new things or discovers new processes that must be named: *cellophane*, *penicillin*, *plastic*. A war brings men together in new relationships and gives them new arms that must be named so that we can talk about them: *flak*, *bazooka*, *brass hat*. Industry grows in size, produces new materials, develops new methods, comes into conflict with labor, hence words like *consumer credit*, *monopoly*, and *closed shop*. Relations among nations become strained, various alignments are made, and international organizations are formed, hence *sanctions*, *power politics*, *mandate*. The uncertainty and tension in modern life give rise to certain social problems, and at the same time new words to describe them: *juvenile delinquent*, *foster-parent*, *public enemy*. New types of entertainment in the forms of the motion picture and the radio arise, and so terms like *animated cartoon*, *B-picture*, *Hays Office*, *guest star*, *audition*, and *transcription* come into popular use.

An interesting contrast might be noted between the terms from modern activities which follow and those which we discussed in the chapter on terms from traditional pursuits. We showed there that many of the terms were used in extended meanings to cover situations that in some way resembled the original situations. But this is not done to any extent with the words in this chapter. One reason for this is that these words are principally nouns, names

of things and people, and do not include as many verbs and adjectives. We are still mainly interested in what these many new things are called, and are not yet in sufficiently intimate contact with the various fields to use the terms which they have introduced comfortably in extended or metaphorical meanings. However, the terms which these present-day activities have called forth are indispensable in any reference to the fields to which they apply, and are well worth a close examination as representative expressions of modern life.

TERMS FROM BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND LABOR

- absentee ownership.** Ownership of a company or land by persons who live away from the locality of the property from which they profit. Also known as *absenteeism*.
- assembly line.** A grouping of machines and workers so that work passes from operation to operation in a direct line until the product is assembled.
- bear.** A stock market term for a person who sells stocks in the anticipation of buying them at a lower price.
- bonus.** A premium or gift in addition to regular compensation, usually in money.
- boycott.** To force a course of action by refusing to deal or associate with a firm or person. The term originated with such action by the Land-Leaguers in Ireland against a certain Captain Boycott, a land agent.
- bull.** A stock market term for a person who buys stocks in the anticipation of selling them at a higher price.
- closed shop.** A plant employing only members of a certain union.
- collective bargaining.** Negotiation between employer and organized employees in regard to conditions of employment.
- compulsory arbitration.** Process by which disputes between employers and employees which are not settled by discussion must be submitted to a third party for decision, the resulting decision being binding on both parties.

- consumer credit.** Credit extended to the consumer for the purchase of consumer goods. Modern forms include installment buying and the personal finance business.
- cooling-off period.** An interval during which parties to a dispute agree not to resort to action such as a strike or lockout.
- craft union.** A labor union whose members are in a particular trade. See *trade union*.
- curbstone broker.** Or *curb broker*. One who trades in securities not listed on the stock exchange. The *curb market*, now conducted in a building, was originally held on the sidewalk.
- excess profits tax.** A tax on business profits in excess of the average profits over a specified period of time. This tax was introduced during the First World War.
- fink.** A professional strikebreaker, particularly one supplied by a strikebreaking agency. A *fink* differs from a *scab* in that the latter is a regular employee of a company who works during a strike, while the fink is imported to work during a strike.
- general strike.** A concerted strike by workers in all or many trades within an area.
- goon.** A strikebreaker who is expected to use force if necessary to help break a strike.
- holding company.** A corporation which holds stock of one or more companies, called *subsidiaries*.
- industrial union.** A labor union whose membership may include all workers in a given industry, in contrast to a *craft or trade union*, whose members are skilled in a particular trade.
- injunction.** A legal order which restrains an act before it is committed. Injunctions were frequently invoked to curtail picketing in a strike or boycott.
- installment buying.** A plan of consumer credit whereby a person may have possession of an article by making a

small down payment and agreeing to make future periodic payments.

labor relations. The interaction of employer and labor groups.

liaison. Co-ordination of activities, as between departments.

lockout. The closing of a place of business by an employer during a labor dispute.

market research. Scientific investigation of a market or area for the purpose of determining how advertising or other sales efforts may be planned or improved. Also used for determining the effect of advertising on sales.

mechanization. The substitution of machinery for tools using human labor.

Mimeograph. Trade-name for a copying device using a stencil.

mogul. Colloquial for "a great personage"; an important business man. Originally referred to one of the Mongolian conquerors of India.

monopoly. Exclusive or nearly exclusive control of the supply or manufacture of a commodity or service.

moratorium. Postponement of the date for payment of a debt.

office. Business firm or the place where such a firm carries on its business. Also a place where white-collar workers are employed, as distinct from a shop (*q.v.*).

open shop. A plant in which both union and non-union workers may hold jobs.

organize. Short for "to organize into a union."

overtime. Time beyond, or in excess of, a set limit; extra working time.

pay envelope. Wages or salary, or specifically the envelope containing one's wages.

payroll. List of persons entitled to compensation and the proper amounts to be paid them. *To be on the payroll* is to be employed.

- picket.** One who patrols the entrance of a business establishment in an effort to dissuade persons from entering. Possibly derived from the signs pickets carry which state their demands or purpose; these signs are generally mounted on wooden stâkes, which are known as *pickets*.
- piece work.** Work paid for at a rate based on the amount done rather than on the time employed.
- prefabrication.** Process of making a product in separate parts which are later assembled at the point where the product is to be used.
- preferential shop.** A plant where union members are given preference in such matters as hiring, lay-off, and dismissal.
- price ceiling.** Maximum prices legally established.
- priority.** Order of preference, for example, in the rationing of materials or services.
- production line.** See *assembly line*.
- public utility.** An economic service closely related to basic needs such as light, heat, water, transportation. Also the organization which operates such services.
- realtor.** A real-estate broker. Strictly, a broker who is a member of the National Association of Real Estate Boards.
- reconversion.** The process by which industry changes from wartime to peacetime activity.
- scab.** A workman who works for lower wages than, or under conditions contrary to, those prescribed by a union; a worker who replaces a striking workman.
- shift.** A spell of work, done during certain hours, as the *night shift*.
- shop.** Generic term for a plant or factory or division of these where goods are made or repaired.
- sitdown strike.** Work stoppage accompanied by occupation of the company premises by workers.
- slogan.** An advertising phrase. From the Gaelic word for an army cry.

- stretch-out.** Workers' designation of an efficiency system requiring increased output with no increase in pay. Also referred to as *speedup*.
- sweatshop.** Workroom in the sweating system; a system which takes advantage of the necessities of employees and forces them to work long hours at low wages under poor conditions.
- straw boss.** Workers' contemptuous term for a sub-foreman. Possibly from *straw man*, a puppet.
- sympathy strike.** Strike called in support of a strike in another plant or industry.
- take home pay.** The residue of wages after certain deductions have been made, as for income tax.
- time and a half.** The usual rate of pay for overtime work.
- time study.** A determination of the time required to do a task.
- trade-mark.** Word, device, or symbol indicating manufacture of an article of merchandise.
- trade union.** Voluntary association of working people organized to maintain their rights and interests. Strictly, a union composed of workers who have a particular skill, such as carpenters, electricians, or printers. Compare *industrial union*.
- trouble shooter.** Colloquial for a specialist sent to solve some difficulty.
- tycoon.** Colloquial for an industrial magnate. From the Japanese *taikun*: "great lord."
- union shop.** A plant in which all employees must be members of a union.
- watered stock.** Stock of a company increased in nominal amount or value without proportionate addition to the assets. The term is said to have originated from the practice of permitting cattle to acquire an abnormal thirst through feeding them salt; then, on the way to market, increasing their weight by allowing them to drink large amounts of water.

white-collar worker. Member of the large class of salaried workers, especially office workers, who feel it necessary to be well-groomed during working hours. In England the preferred term is *black-coat worker*.

workmen's compensation. The compensation that a workman may recover from an employer in case of accident arising out of the employment.

yellow-dog contract. Slang for a contract of employment in which the worker agrees not to join a labor union.

TERMS RELATED TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

agent provocateur. An undercover agent who incites individuals to overt acts and thus causes dissension.

anti-Semitism. Opposition to equal participation of Jewish people in the social and legal rights afforded by a nation to its people. Literally, the term refers to all Semitic peoples, but it is used to apply only to Jews.

big-brother plan. A plan for reducing juvenile delinquency through cooperation of community leaders who act as *big brothers* to boys brought before juvenile courts.

birth control. A term established in customary usage for behavior designed to prevent conception.

black market. The selling of goods in violation of rationing and price-fixing regulations.

blue-ribbon jury. Refers to a jury chosen on the basis of special qualifications such as intelligence or education.

bootlegging. Originally was restricted to the sense of carrying liquor on the person, usually in one's boot. Is now applied to illegal traffic in other products as well as liquor.

censorship. Control by officials in advance of publication or performance of the content of publications, plays, films, or radio programs.

child labor. Regular full-time employment in a factory or on a farm of children under an age determined by law.

- class consciousness.** Awareness of one's class position; spirit of group loyalty, as in disputes between capital and labor.
- companionate marriage.** A proposed form of marriage permitting divorce by mutual consent unless there are children. The concept and the term were made popular by Judge Ben Lindsey of Colorado in the 1920's.
- confidence game.** A method of swindling in which the victim is psychologically prepared over a period of time beforehand by being induced to place his confidence in the swindler, who is also known as a *con man*.
- daylight saving.** Advancement of clocks one hour to use a greater proportion of daylight hours for work or recreation.
- deflation.** An economic condition characterized by a fall in prices.
- direct action.** Resort to strikes, sabotage, and the like to accomplish political, social, or economic changes.
- dole.** A donation given by an agency to supplement the individual or family income. While this term is used in America, it has greater currency in England. The preferred American term is *relief*.
- dry.** One who advocates prohibition of spirituous liquors.
- dust bowl.** A colloquial term for the area in the Middle West much subject to drought and dust storms.
- earned income.** Income derived from wages, salaries, profits, or fees, as opposed to that derived from invested capital.
- economics.** The study of the several ways in which men promote their material welfare by organizing their labor, natural resources, and culture. This has more or less superseded the older term "political economy."
- foster-parent.** A man or woman who has reared the child of other parents as his own.
- gangster.** A member of a gang or racketeering group.
- G-man.** Short for "Government-man," a member of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

gold standard. A monetary standard whereby all currency may be converted on demand into gold. Adopted 1900; abandoned 1934.

health insurance. A general term covering all plans for offering medical care, hospitalization, and disability benefits on a pre-payment basis. See *socialized medicine*.

hospitalization. A system of insurance providing hospital care in return for payment of a small premium.

income tax. An excise tax levied upon salaries, wages, commissions, rents, royalties, interest, dividends, profits, or increase in capital, in accordance with the Sixteenth Amendment.

index number. One of a series of numbers expressing the relative changes in a variable or group of variables from time to time or from place to place.

inflation. The rapid increase in the amount of money or credit in circulation which causes prices to rise.

Jim Crow. Song and dance based upon a Negro song (1832). The expression *to jump Jim Crow* means to jump or dance. The term *Jim Crow* also designates the policy whereby certain facilities, such as schools, restaurants, and washrooms, are set aside for the exclusive use of Negroes.

juvenile delinquency. The anti-social acts of persons under age, especially of children under sixteen.

kidnap. To seize, carry off, or entice a person from his home or country or to detain him against his will.

laissez-faire. The doctrine which emphasizes giving the individual maximum freedom to follow his own interests, especially in economic relationships. From the French, literally, "Let him do as he chooses."

legal aid. A social service providing legal assistance to those in need, especially in overcoming obstacles met in an effort to obtain justice.

migratory worker. A worker who finds casual employment in different places at various times of the year.

- norm.** The standard or criterion for judging the character or conduct of an individual or form or function of society.
- nudist.** A member of a group meeting to associate in nakedness for reasons of health, esthetics, and the like.
- occupational disease.** A disease contracted during employment as a result of certain customary hazards of that employment.
- Okie.** Name for a migratory worker from Oklahoma, popularized in *The Grapes of Wrath*, a novel by John Steinbeck.
- panic.** Disaster in the money market when credit falls, usually involving hoarding, migration, and runs on banks.
- passive resistance.** Doctrine of resistance by refusing to act or by otherwise opposing actively.
- personnel work.** A term for work with the personnel rather than with the matériel of production, including such matters as hiring, classifying, training, wage rates, discharge, health, and recreation. See *labor relations*.
- pressure group.** An organization conducting a propaganda campaign and employing lobbyists to influence legislation.
- prohibition.** The policy of forbidding the manufacture, transportation, and sale of intoxicating beverages.
- propaganda.** An attempt to influence or control the opinions and actions of other persons.
- public enemy.** A dangerous criminal; possibly first used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- publicity.** Advertising; whatever secures public attention; usually information appearing in newspapers or heard over the air.
- public opinion poll.** Investigation of public sentiment with regard to certain questions.
- public relations.** The relations with the public which an individual or organization must take into consideration in carrying out its social functions.

- race.** A biological subdivision based upon similarity of ancestry and consequent physical kinship.
- race relations.** Cultural contacts between members of different races, with resultant problems involving prejudice and conflict as well as toleration and assimilation.
- racketeering.** The systematic extortion of money by organized gangsters. A *racket* is slang for a fraudulent scheme or any easy way of making money.
- rationing.** Equitable distribution of goods and services in time of war or other critical period.
- regimentation.** The organization of people through teaching and discipline to develop uniformity of behavior and sterility of thought.
- rehabilitation.** Re-education and re-direction of delinquents, criminals, or mentally disturbed persons.
- relief.** Money or necessities given persons who are in need. See *dole*.
- rugged individualism.** A popular phrase suggesting the self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the American pioneer.
- sales tax.** A tax on the sale of goods, usually a fixed percentage of the selling price.
- slum clearance.** The replacement of squalid and wretched living conditions by modern dwellings.
- social climber.** One who seeks to cultivate persons on a higher level and to improve his own social standing.
- socialized medicine.** A popular term for public regulation of the services and fees of doctors, or for cooperative projects for supplying medical care at nominal cost.
- social security.** The Social Security Board, organized 1933, administers the national old-age insurance plan and passes on similar State plans.
- social significance.** As popularly used, refers to the social context of ideas or acts.
- social work.** Or *social service*. Organized philanthropic assistance given to the destitute, sick, and underprivileged.

- sociology.** The scientific study of the phenomena arising out of the group relations of human beings.
- technocracy.** A school of thought stressing the importance of the technician in modern society and especially the need for giving engineers control of the economy.
- third degree.** A popular term for beating and intimidating suspect persons before arraignment in order to obtain information.
- underworld.** A popular term for criminal activity, commercialized vice, gambling, and the like.
- unemployment compensation.** Money paid by the government over certain stated periods to those unable to find employment.
- V.D.** Venereal disease.
- wet.** Advocate of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages. Compare *dry*.
- zoning.** Marking off the city in areas or zones with restrictions upon the character of buildings to be built and the use to which they may be put.

TERMS FROM WORLD AFFAIRS

- absolutism.** Autocratic control, especially in the form of a national government, in which supreme power is exercised by the monarch or by a small group.
- appeasement.** The foreign policy of yielding to the demands of a potential enemy in order to avoid armed conflict.
- arbitration.** A process by which a disputed matter is submitted to one or more disinterested persons whose decision is binding upon both parties.
- bolshevist.** A radical who believes in the overthrow of capitalism. *Bolshevik* is from the Russian for "majority."
- cartel.** Association of business men in similar industries in the same or different countries for control of production.

chargé d'affaires. Head of a diplomatic mission, often one temporarily in charge of an embassy.

class. A group of persons having the same characteristics or status; e.g., the *working class* or the *educated class*. Also persons born in the same year who are subject to being called for military service.

coalition. A combination or temporary alliance for joint action.

collective security. Agreement among nations to maintain international peace through united action or a league.

commissar. In the U.S.S.R., a department head who would be called a commissioner or secretary (in the President's cabinet) in this country.

dictatorship. Absolute power over a state, usually seized by a leader or a group without effective constitutional limitation.

fascism. The movement that began in Italy in 1919, allegedly in opposition to radical elements, or any movement resembling it. The *fascisti* derived their name from the *fascies* or bundle of rods borne before Roman magistrates as a symbol of their authority.

four freedoms. The objectives of the United Nations policy as stated by F. D. Roosevelt, January 6, 1941: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear.

ghetto. A place, originally outside the town walls, where Jews live voluntarily or under compulsion.

good-neighbor policy. Popular term for the policy of hemispheric diplomatic solidarity and defense during the administration of F. D. Roosevelt.

internment. Confinement of enemy aliens or suspect persons in special camps or areas.

intervention. Forcible interference by a state in the internal affairs of another.

- isolationist.** One who favors aloofness in international politics.
- mandate.** A directive from the people, especially by an election. In international relations, one nation may have jurisdiction over a more backward area, known as a *mandated area*.
- militarism.** The spirit that exalts the military virtues and ideals, leading usually to a policy of aggressive military preparedness.
- nationalism.** Emphasis upon realities and bonds of nationality, especially as a basis for group action.
- neutrality.** According to international law, the status of a state that remains out of war.
- pacifism.** Opposition to war and to militarism for any reason.
- plebiscite.** A referendum. The vote of the people on an important issue.
- plenary session.** A session of a complete body in contradistinction to a meeting of a part of it.
- pogrom.** The wholesale slaughter of a group of unarmed persons because of popular hatred or prejudice. Applied first to the massacre of Jews in Russia, the word is from the Russian for "devastation."
- popular front.** Coalition of leftist and liberal groups or parties. Also called *united front*.
- power politics.** Political actions and policies based on strength rather than the justice of the question at issue.
- protective custody.** The detention of persons essential to the prosecution of justice, especially to protect them against reprisals.
- protective tariff.** A tariff designed to protect domestic producers, as opposed to a tariff for revenue.
- protocol.** (1) Preliminary diplomatic memorandum. (2) Ceremonial etiquette.
- refugee.** One who has fled his native land to escape persecution.

- sanctions.** Military intervention or economic embargo to force a change in policy on the part of a nation.
- secretariat.** Governmental department headed by a secretary. Also the permanent staff of such an international organization as the United Nations.
- soviet.** From the Russian: a council or body of elected delegates of the people, forming the governing legislative body.
- syncretism.** The amalgamation of conflicting parties, principles, or cultures, especially the assimilation of foreign groups.
- terrorism.** The technique by which minorities indulge in violence to crush their opponents and intimidate the general population.
- totalitarian state.** A state with a dictatorial form of government.
- unilateral action.** Action in which an express obligation is imposed on but one party to a contract or engagement.
- united front.** See *popular front*.
- United Nations.** The organization of nations founded in 1945 to preserve the peace of the world. Earlier, those nations that fought the Second World War against the Axis plus a few that remained neutral.
- war monger.** A jingo; one who stirs up war.

WORLD WAR TERMS

- ack-ack.** Anti-aircraft fire. Named for a British pronunciation of the letters AA.
- alert.** An air-raid signal.
- alligator.** Nickname for an amphibious tracked vehicle.
- AMG.** Allied Military Government, assigned to rule enemy territory.
- Army-Navy "E."** Production award for exceptional performance on the home front.

arsenal of democracy. A phrase used by F. D. Roosevelt in 1940 to describe the role of the United States in support of the nations opposing the Axis powers.

Aryan. A term loosely used to describe descendants of the Caucasian race originally occupying the Iranian plateau and parts of India, from whose language the Indo-European languages are derived. Used by the Nazis to designate "Germanic" peoples as opposed to others, who were referred to as *non-Aryans*.

Aussie. Colloquial for an Australian.

AWVS. American Women's Voluntary Services, founded 1940 to perform various civilian and quasi-military tasks on the home front.

Axis. Alliance of the fascist nations, also called the Rome-Berlin-Tokio Axis.

basic training. The first training period undergone by a newly inducted soldier in which he is instructed in the fundamentals of military life and techniques.

battlewagon. Slang for a battleship.

bazooka. Nickname for a special, portable anti-tank gun. Named for a semi-musical instrument which it resembles.

blackout. Total darkness as a precaution against enemy air-raids.

blitz. Short for *blitzkrieg*, German for "lightning war."

blood bank. Storage place for blood plasma, used in treating war victims.

bombs away. The command to release bombs from an aircraft.

bond drive. A concerted effort to sell war bonds.

boot training. Training course for Navy recruits.

brass. Slang for the higher officers of the American Army who determine policy. Also *brass hats*.

briefing. Instruction of a bomber flight-crew before a bombing mission.

buck for. Slang expression meaning "to try for."

buck private. A private soldier, especially a new recruit.

buzz bomb. Slang for a type of robot bomb used against Britain.

chow. Slang for food.

combat fatigue. A psychoneurosis, formerly called "shell-shock."

commandos. Picked men from the British armed services who made sudden raids on Nazi-held territory. The term was first used during the Boer War to mean a military body or a raid. The tactics employed by them and similar groups in other armies are referred to as *commando tactics*. See also *rangers*.

communiqué. An official communication, especially from armed forces in the field.

concentration camp. In authoritarian states, a place for detention of political opponents without any process of law.

conscientious objector. Or *conchie*. One who, because of religious or humanitarian convictions, refuses to take any part in war.

C.O. Commanding Officer.

D-day; H-hour. Designations for the time of a future operation, used in making plans.

decontaminate. To cleanse personnel or an area after a gas attack. Also, to clear of mines.

defeatist. One who admits defeat on the grounds that continuation of a contest is impossible or inadvisable.

demilitarize. To do away with the military organization of an area.

demobilization. The wholesale reduction of a nation's military establishment after a war.

dive bombing. Steep-angle diving of a plane to give greater velocity to a bomb.

dogface. Navy and Marine term for a soldier.

dogtag. Nickname for an identification tag.

- doughboy.** Term for a soldier, especially an infantryman. Probably first used in the Civil War to refer to the brass buttons on an infantryman's uniform, which were called *doughboys*. Used almost universally to refer to American infantrymen during the First World War.
- draft.** Term for Selective Service System of compulsory active service with the armed forces.
- duck.** An amphibious motorized craft propelled on rubber tires on land.
- ersatz.** Substitute, as in *ersatz* rubber. From the German.
- expendable.** Adjective referring to troops or equipment that can be sacrificed if necessary to achieve an end.
- fatigues.** Clothing worn during *fatigue duty*, such as cleaning grounds and the like.
- fifth column.** Secret sympathizers of an enemy engaged in espionage and sabotage within defense lines. The term originated in Spain to describe Franco sympathizers in Madrid, 1936-1939.
- fish.** Slang for a torpedo.
- flak.** From the German: *Flieger Abwehr Kanonen*, "aircraft defense cannon." Term for anti-aircraft fire.
- Fortress Europe.** Translation of the German *Festung Europa*, a descriptive term used by the Nazis to indicate Germany and surrounding occupied territory.
- foxhole.** Defensive emplacement dug by an individual soldier, usually 4-5 feet in depth and 3 feet in diameter.
- fraternize.** Originally, fraternizing referred to social relations between officers and enlisted men. Later it referred to social intercourse between occupation troops and civilians.
- gestapo.** Abbreviation of *Geheime Staats Polizei*, Nazi secret state police.
- G.I.** Literally, government issue, referring to supplies carried by the Quartermaster. By extension, used to refer to enlisted men.
- gold braid.** Term for officers.

- gold brick.** Used as a verb meaning "to shirk an assignment."
Also a noun meaning "a shirker."
- government-in-exile.** The government of a country which has been occupied by the enemy, functioning at some point outside the country.
- graveyard shift.** The night shift at a war plant, 12 midnight to 8 A.M. or 11 P.M. to 7 A.M.
- gremlin.** One of the "little people" who make things go wrong, especially with airplanes.
- guerrilla warfare.** Irregular though often legitimate warfare in connection with a regular war; the acts of independent bands. From the Spanish for "little war."
- half track.** Vehicle with two front wheels for steering and tracks (as in a tractor) behind for propulsion used in moving artillery, etc.
- hash stripe.** Slang for chevron or service stripe.
- Hitlerite.** Sympathizer with or adherent of Hitler.
- infiltrate.** To pass through or into; for example, to send troops into or nearer to hostile territory.
- jeep.** Nickname for a small Army car. The name is perhaps derived from the letters G.P. (General Purpose) painted on the first models.
- kamikaze.** Japanese suicide planes.
- K.P.** Kitchen police: enlisted men detailed to assist cooks in the Army mess.
- K-ration.** One of the standard, non-spoilable rations issued by the U.S. Army for use in the field or elsewhere where cooking facilities are not available.
- kraut.** Slang for a German, from *sauerkraut*.
- lebensraum.** German for "living space." The Nazi slogan for their own expansionist aims.
- LST.** Abbreviation of "Landing Ship: Tanks."
- luftwaffe.** The Nazi air force.
- medic.** A member of the U.S. Army's Medical Corps.

- mosquito boat.** Name for a motor torpedo (PT) boat.
- mosquito plane.** British fighter bomber plane, the De Havilland 98.
- M.P.** Military Police.
- munich.** Symbol of appeasement, because of the agreement signed at Munich in 1938 between the British and French and the Axis.
- munitions dump.** Storage place for munitions.
- OCS.** (1) Officer Candidate School. (2) Office of Civilian Supply.
- OPA.** Office of Price Administration, established 1941.
- over the hump.** Past the most difficult part of an undertaking. Also, over the high mountains between Burma and China.
- OWI.** Office of War Information, the American propaganda agency, established 1942.
- padre.** Nickname for a chaplain.
- panzer.** German for "armor." Applies to tanks.
- paratrooper.** From *parachute* + *trooper*. A soldier trained to land in a territory by parachute.
- partisan.** Adherent of a party or faction; member of a body of light troops engaged in raids, often guerrillas.
- pull.** Slang verb meaning "to get" as in the expression *to pull K.P.*
- quisling.** Sympathizer with a foreign country and ultimate traitor. Named for Major Vidkun Quisling, head of the Nazi party in Norway.
- Quonset hut.** A prefabricated house about 10 feet high consisting of a wooden frame and a curved roof of corrugated metal.
- rangers.** American equivalent of the British Commandos, named for Major Rogers' Rangers of Colonial days.
- reconnaissance.** Examination of a geographical region to gain knowledge of troop movements and the like.

robot bombs. Jet-propelled bombs sent to England by the Nazis during the summer of 1944. *Robot*, derived from the Czech for "compulsory service," means "an automatic device that operates with almost human intelligence."

scorched earth. Refers to a defensive policy whereby a retreating army or the populace burns and destroys as it retreats.

Seabees. Name for the U.S. Naval Construction Battalions (C.B.) whose work includes building landing fields, hospitals, fortifications, docks, barracks, and the like.

shelter. Bomb-proof room or area, used during an air-raid.

snafu. Military slang: "(The) situation (is) *normal—all fouled up.*"

Spars. Women's Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard, established 1942.

stateside. Slang for the United States, used by soldiers and sailors stationed abroad.

storm trooper. Member of the private army of the Nazi party (the *Sturmabteilung*).

sweat it out. Slang for to wait hopelessly and helplessly for something to happen.

swing shift. Defense factory shift between midnight and 8 A.M. See *graveyard shift*.

Tommy. Name for a British soldier.

tommy gun. Nickname for a Thompson sub-machine gun, an automatic weapon firing at one pull of the trigger twenty rounds from a straight magazine or fifty rounds from a drum magazine.

top kick. Slang for first sergeant.

tracer bullet. A bullet equipped with a *tracer*, or device for marking its flight by a trail of smoke or fire.

unconditional surrender. A surrender made without conditions.

- underground.** Native resistance groups, usually in an occupied country.
- UNRRA.** United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, established 1943. Usually pronounced as if it were a word: *ŭn-rah*.
- USO.** United Services Organization, which provided U.S. servicemen with recreational facilities during the Second World War.
- V-E day; V-J day.** Day of victory in Europe and in Japan.
- V-mail.** Special kind of letters sent to members of the armed forces abroad. Original letters were microfilmed, transported to their destination, and then enlarged. Used to save weight and space on mail planes and vessels.
- victory garden.** Name for home vegetable gardens after December 7, 1941.
- Wac.** Women's Army Corps, founded in 1942 as the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC). *Wac* also may refer to a member of this organization.
- walkie-talkie.** A portable, two-way radio set.
- Waves.** Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service, in the U.S. Naval Reserve, an organization established 1942. A member of the organization was called a *Wave*.
- Yank.** Term for an American soldier.
- yard bird.** Slang for an incompetent or helpless person in an Army camp who is given odd jobs to do.

TERMS FROM MODERN SCIENCE

- air conditioning.** The washing, humidifying, and dehumidifying of air before it enters a room.
- alloy.** A substance composed of two or more metals usually fused together intimately in a molten state.
- aptitude test.** A method of estimating a person's potentialities for success by means of present performance.

- atom.** From the Greek for "uncut" or "indivisible." According to the atomic theory, the basic unit of an element.
- bakelite.** A synthetic resin, which has uses similar to those of hard rubber and celluloid. Named for its discoverer, Leo Baekeland.
- biophysics.** The physics of living organisms.
- carbohydrate.** A neutral compound of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen; for example, sugar, starch, etc.
- cathode ray.** A ray projected from the cathode (negative pole or electrode) of a vacuum tube and generating X-rays by impinging upon solids.
- cell.** In biology a microscopic mass of protoplasm, including a nucleus and cell membrane. *Cell* is used also in other ways, for example in electricity to denote a receptacle for generating electricity, containing electrodes and an electrolyte.
- cellophane.** Viscose solidified in thin transparent waterproof strips or sheets.
- chain reaction.** A term used in physical chemistry to denote a chemical reaction in which the energy of reaction is transferable with the result that a sequence of similar reactions is produced.
- cosmic ray.** Any of the rays that bombard the earth from the cosmos and help to cause the ionization of the earth's atmosphere.
- cross-breeding.** Breeding between two varieties of the same species.
- cyclotron.** A device used for atomic fission.
- Diesel.** An internal-combustion engine invented by Rudolf Diesel of Munich.
- dynamo.** A machine for converting mechanical energy into electrical energy. From the Greek for "power."
- electric eye.** Colloquial for a photoelectric cell (*q.v.*).
- electron.** The most elementary charge of negative electricity.

- electronics.** The branch of physics which utilizes electron tubes of various types to produce electrical currents.
- element.** A substance which cannot be separated into substances different from itself by ordinary chemical means. In early times, the physical universe was believed to be composed of the *four elements*: fire, air, water, and earth.
- erosion.** The wearing away of land by the action of water.
- fission.** Breaking up into parts, as in atomic fission.
- genetics.** The branch of biology dealing with heredity and variation. From the Latin *genus*, "birth, race, kind, sort."
- gyroscope.** A wheel or disk which spins rapidly about an axis and is free to rotate about other axes perpendicular to the axis of the spin and to each other. Gyroscopes are used as stabilizers on ships and planes.
- heavy water.** Water consisting of molecules containing hydrogen of atomic weight 2.
- hydrocarbon.** Acetylene, benzene, and other compounds containing only hydrogen and carbon.
- infra red.** Pertaining to the rays just beyond the red end of the visible spectrum, with wave-lengths longer than those of visible light.
- ion.** An electrified particle formed when a neutral atom loses or gains one or more electrons.
- intelligence quotient.** Or I.Q. A number denoting the intelligence of a person, determined by dividing his mental age by his chronological age and multiplying by 100.
- latex.** A fluid found in certain seed plants and used commercially to make rubber, chicle, and the like.
- micrometer.** An instrument for measuring minute distances. The micrometer caliper makes use of this device.
- molecule.** A unit of matter, the smallest that retains chemical identity with the substance in mass.
- neon.** A gaseous element which glows in a vacuum tube.

- nuclear physics.** That branch of physics which deals with the nucleus of the atom.
- nylon.** An artificial silk produced from coal, air, and water.
- octane.** An isomeric hydrocarbon. Gasoline of high octane is used in high speed motors.
- organic chemistry.** Chemistry dealing with the compounds of carbon.
- phosphorescent.** Emitting light without sensible heat.
- photoelectric cell.** A cell whose electrical properties are modified by the action of light.
- physiochemistry.** The quantitative study of the relations between chemical and physical properties of substances and their constitution.
- plastics.** Substances which can be formed into permanent shapes by means of heat and pressure and which will keep their shape later. *Celluloid* was one of the earliest plastics, an adaptation of cellulose nitrate, which was also used in other substances such as *plastic wood* and *safety glass*. Cellulose acetate was used in photographic film. Synthetic resins are laboratory products and include *bakelite*, *synthetic rubber* (Neoprene and Buna), *lucite*, and the various *protein plastics*.
- polaroid.** Edwin H. Land in about 1920 discovered many uses for *polarized light*, i.e., light passing through a medium such as tourmaline and emerging with vibrations lying in a single crosswise direction. Polaroid materials make possible glareless automobile headlights, three-dimensional motion pictures, and the like, and are extensively used in scientific work.
- positron.** A positive charge of mass, smaller than a proton.
- protein.** The nitrogenous material in vegetable and animal substance.
- protoplasm.** The essential substance of cell body and nucleus, a viscous translucent material holding fine granules in suspension.

- radar.** Composite term from the initial letters of "Radio Detecting And Ranging." Devices used to detect the presence of objects at large distances from an observer.
- radioactive.** Substances which emit radiant energy by disintegration of the nuclei of atoms. Radioactive substances include radium, uranium, and thorium.
- rayon.** An artificial silk.
- relativity.** Theory developed by Albert Einstein which involves the relative motion of two systems and the measurement of the speed of light.
- sound-proofing.** Insulation so as to obstruct the passage of sound, *e.g.*, in partitions and floors.
- soya bean.** An Asiatic legume which yields oil, flour, and meal.
- stratosphere.** The upper portion of the atmosphere.
- streamlined.** Design of a moving body to decrease air-resistance.
- sun spot.** A dark spot appearing on the surface of the sun, visible through the telescope, and often accompanied by terrestrial magnetic storms.
- synthetic.** Usually refers to artificial products such as synthetic silk, drugs, dyes, and the like.
- teletype.** A system of communication using the teletypewriter or printing telegraph, which enables the rapid and simultaneous conveying of typewritten messages to many places.
- thermos bottle.** From the Greek *thermos*: hot. A vacuum bottle which keeps its contents, usually liquid, hot for a long period.
- turbine.** A rotary engine, consisting of curved vanes on a central spindle.
- ultra violet.** Opposed to *infra red*, outside the visible spectrum at its violet end.
- uranium.** From the planet *Uranus*. A radioactive element found in pitchblende.

X-ray. A radiation similar to light radiation but of very short wave length.

TERMS FROM MEDICINE AND PSYCHIATRY

abnormal. Deviating from the normal condition or average.

allergy. Susceptibility to certain substances, such as dust, pollen, food, shown by reaction to inoculation.

bifocals. Eyeglass lenses having one part that corrects for distant vision and another for near vision.

blood groups. Four types of human blood determined by the presence or absence of two chemical elements called A and B.

case history. A factual record of a person's ancestry, personal history, and environment.

chemotherapy. Treatment by means of sulfa drugs.

claustrophobia. A neurotic fear of being in a closed room or narrow space.

complex. An exaggerated fear with regard to something, such as an inferiority complex (*q.v.*).

compulsion. A feeling of being irresistibly driven to do something irrational.

conditioned reflex. An automatic behavior pattern, such as Pavlov's example of the flow of saliva in a dog's mouth when a bell is sounded. Originally when food was presented to the dog it salivated; at the same time a bell was sounded. Later the dog salivated when the bell was sounded without the presentation of food.

contact lenses. Artificial lenses which are fitted over the eyeballs rather than worn on frames.

convalescent home. A nursing home for patients who are being gradually restored to health.

defense mechanism. A psychological device employed by a person to avoid the consequences of an act or to conceal the true state of matters pertaining to his beliefs or attitudes.

diet. To eat and drink certain prescribed foods or to avoid such foods. Popularly, to follow such a course in order to lose weight. Also used as in the expression *to be on a diet*.

DT's. Delirium tremens, a violent delirium resulting from prolonged and excessive use of alcoholic liquors.

euthanasia. The practice of "mercy deaths" for persons painfully or incurably ill or hopelessly defective.

extrovert. One whose interest is in external objects and actions; one who is not given to analyzing his own feelings. The opposite of *introvert* (*q.v.*).

fever therapy. Treatment of an ailment involving the raising of general body temperature, either by injecting a foreign protein or by a mechanical device such as a fever box.

fixation. An arrest in development, such as that caused by a strong attachment in childhood.

free association. See *association of ideas*.

hysteria. A psychoneurosis resulting from mental causes characterized by excitability and derangements. From the Greek for "womb."

inferiority complex. A neurotic condition, based on a feeling of inferiority arising from various causes, *e.g.*, from some physical defect. Often used inaccurately to indicate such a feeling whether or not neurosis is involved.

inhibition. A negative control restraining some particular attitude or behavior.

intern. Also *interne*. A resident physician in a hospital, especially one who is preparing for independent practice.

intravenous. In or within the veins; into a vein, by injection.

introvert. A person who dwells primarily upon his own feelings and is comparatively indifferent to social relations. See *extrovert*.

libido. In psychoanalytic theory, energy and motive force derived from the sex instinct.

lie detector. The polygraph, a group of instruments recording pulse waves, blood pressure, galvanic reflex, and re-

spiratory movements by which deviations from normal during questioning are studied. It is based on the theory that telling a lie produces certain bodily changes.

manic-depressive. Refers to a type of mental disorder characterized by alternating periods of excitement and depression.

marijuana. Native wild plant of Mexico and the Southwest, with effects like those of opium. In cigarette form, known as a "reefer."

masochism. Addiction to an abnormal sexual passion in which the individual derives pleasure from being abused or tormented. Named for Von Sacher-Masoch, an Austrian novelist who described masochism.

moron. Person of deficient mentality; one with an I.Q. of 50-69, mental age 7-12 years.

neurotic. The adjective neurotic means "affecting the nerves." In psychiatric terminology, it refers to nervous disorders such as hypochondria, kleptomania, hysteria, etc. which arise from emotional rather than physical causes.

occupational therapy. Treatment of injury or mental ailment in which the patient is given manual tasks such as painting or arts and crafts.

orthodontia. Dentistry which aims to straighten irregular teeth.

out patient. A "walking" or ambulatory patient receiving medical care from a hospital or clinic.

penicillin. A substance developed in molds and fungi which is particularly effective against certain forms of bacteria.

plate. The part of an artificial set of teeth which fits to the mouth.

psychiatry. The medical science which deals with mental disorders.

psychoanalysis. A method of analysis and treatment of personality maladjustments based on the theory that repression of desires causes abnormal reactions. The theory of

psychoanalysis was first fully developed by Sigmund Freud.

psychoneurotic. Neurotic.

psychopath. A person affected with a mental disorder, whose behavior is either abnormally asocial or legally perverted and who has no guilt about his conduct.

psychosis. A severe mental disease characterized by irrational behavior. Mania-depression and schizophrenia are classed as psychoses. The legal term *insane* is applied to psychotic persons.

psychosomatic. Literally pertaining to the mind (*psyche*) and body (*soma*). Is applied to the medical theory which holds that some illnesses are the result of the interaction of mental and physical processes.

rationalization. Preference for socially acceptable reasons for one's conduct rather than for the real reasons, which may be quite different.

sadism. Love of cruelty; especially a sexual perversion in which the individual derives pleasure from abusing or tormenting others. Named for Count de Sade, 1740-1814.

sanitarium. An institution for the treatment of persons physically or mentally ill. The term *sanatorium* usually means an establishment making use of natural therapeutic agents.

schizophrenia. A psychosis; literally, "splitting of the mind," characterized by a withdrawal from reality. Formerly termed *dementia precox*.

shock. A condition following severe injury or pain, in which the blood-pressure falls and the person passes into a state of depression.

shock therapy. Treatment of mental disorders by means of an actual electrical or chemical shock. Not to be confused with *therapy of shock*.

specialist. A doctor who devotes himself to some special branch of medicine.

sterilization. Prevention of propagation, especially of the congenitally insane, by means of a surgical operation. Also, the process of making medical instruments and appliances free of microorganisms.

sulfa drug. Synthetic chemical used to attack bacteria directly, especially the coccus type of germ, and to stop infection.

therapy. Or *therapeutics*. The application of remedies for diseases. *Therapy* today appears in many compound words, e.g., *electrotherapy*, *physiotherapy*, *radio therapy*, *thermotherapy*.

therapy of shock. Use of transfusions, plasma, and special bodily position in the treatment of shock following injury.

transfusion. The transfer of blood from the veins or arteries of one man or animal to another.

virus. Germs which have not been isolated, but which are known to be responsible for certain diseases.

vitamin. In biochemistry, any of a group of constituents of most foods in their natural state, of which very small quantities are essential for the normal nutrition of animals.

TERMS FROM AVIATION

ace. A combat pilot who has shot down five or more enemy planes.

aerodynamics. The branch of dynamics dealing with the motion of air and the forces acting on solid surfaces moving in air.

aeronautics. The science and art of self-sustained flight, applying to lighter-than-air and heavier-than-air aircraft.

aeroplane. See *airplane*.

aerostat. Generic term for lighter-than-air aircraft.

aircraft. General term for air-borne vehicles: See *airplane*, *gyroplane*, *helicopter*, *glider*, *airship*, *balloon*.

- aircraft carrier.** A seagoing surface vessel with a flight deck for landing and take-off of aircraft.
- air log.** An instrument to measure air distance (in miles) covered by an aircraft in flight.
- airplane.** Heavier-than-air, fixed-wing aircraft, mechanically driven. Types include *amphibian*, *flying boat*, *landplane*, *seaplane*.
- air pocket.** Vertical current of air, updraft or downdraft.
- airport.** A place for the landing and take-off of aircraft.
- airship.** Lighter-than-air aircraft, classified as *nonrigid*, *pressure rigid*, *semirigid*, and *rigid*.
- air strip.** Prefabricated, metal-linked stripping used for runways on sand and in jungles.
- altimeter.** An instrument indicating the elevation (in thousands of feet) above a given line such as ground level.
- amphibian.** Airplane which will rise from and alight on either land or water.
- autogiro.** Aircraft lifted by free rotating vanes instead of a wing.
- aviation.** Art or science of locomotion by aircraft.
- aviator.** Generic term for the operator of an aircraft.
- avigation.** Air navigation.
- bail out.** Colloquial, to make a parachute jump.
- balloon.** An aerostat without a propelling system.
- balsa wood.** Light wood of a tropical American tree much used in constructing model airplanes.
- barnstorming.** Slang for the activities of pilots who do stunting and who carry sightseeing passengers.
- beacon.** A light or signaling device used to indicate location or direction.
- beam.** A directional radio signal, producing a steady monotone when the plane stays *on the beam*. This term is also colloquial for "going well."

biplane. An airplane with two wings, one above the other.

blimp. Colloquial for nonrigid airship.

bombsight. A mechanical sighting device for accuracy of aim in dropping bombs from aircraft in flight.

black out. Slang for "faint," especially when coming out of a dive.

buzz. To fly low and fast over an area to impress onlookers.

ceiling. Vertical distance from the ground to the lower limits of a cloud base.

ceiling unlimited. Condition that obtains when the sky is clear, when clouds are scattered, or when the base of the clouds is at least 9750 feet above the point of observation.

clipper. Name for a transoceanic flying boat; from the fast nineteenth century sailing vessels.

cockpit. Space for pilots or passengers in the body of an airplane.

contact flight. Flight in which planes are in contact, as, for example, with the leader of an echelon.

controls. Generic term for the means enabling the pilot to control speed, direction of flight, power, and the like of aircraft.

crack-up. The damaging or wrecking of a plane. Applied colloquially to any collapse.

crash wagon. An emergency truck with firefighting equipment kept in readiness to assist damaged aircraft arriving at an air field.

crate. Slang for an old, outmoded plane.

dead reckoning. Determination of position in the navigation of aircraft.

dirigible. An adjective meaning "steerable." It is often used as a noun meaning "nonrigid airship."

dive. A steep descent at a speed greater than horizontal flying speed.

fighter. An airplane intended for aerial combat and pursuit.

- flare.** A brilliant signaling or illuminating light.
- flying boat.** An airplane in which the body consists of a hull affording the main support on the surface of the water.
- front.** The mixing zone of two dissimilar air masses, the colder, denser air pushing under the warmer air. Such fronts are hazards to fliers.
- fuselage.** The body of an airplane.
- give her the gun.** To increase engine speed. Colloquially, to go ahead full-speed on a project.
- glider.** Heavier-than-air craft like an airplane but without a power plant.
- ground crew.** The ground personnel who service and maintain aircraft.
- gyroplane.** A rotor plane deriving its support from airfoils rotating about a vertical axis.
- hangar.** A shelter for housing aircraft.
- heavier-than-air aircraft.** Any aircraft depending upon motion through air for its support.
- helicopter.** A type of rotor plane capable of both vertical and horizontal motion.
- high.** A meteorological term for an area of high barometric pressure.
- hop.** Slang for an aircraft flight.
- hump.** Slang for mountain or most difficult part of a flight.
- instrument flying.** Piloting an aircraft solely by the use of instruments.
- kite.** Slang for an aircraft.
- landing gear.** The understructure affording support for an aircraft in contact with land or water.
- lighter-than-air aircraft.** Aircraft depending for support upon the buoyancy of the surrounding air.
- link trainer.** A ground training device by which flight conditions may be simulated.
- Mae West.** Colloquial for a rubber inflatable life jacket.

monoplane. An airplane with one main supporting surface or wing.

pancake landing. A landing in which an airplane levels off at too low a speed, stalls, and drops vertically to the ground.

parachute. A large, circular, umbrella-shaped device used to retard descent of a falling body.

pilot. One who operates the controls of an airplane in flight.

propeller. An assembly of rotating blades mounted on a power-driven shaft.

pull out. To change from a dive to horizontal flight.

radiosonde. A small automatic radio transmitter and weather-recording device.

rip cord. The cord releasing the parachute from its pack.

Roger! Means "Yes, sir," "All right," "Okay." From "R as in Roger."

rotor plane. A heavier-than-air craft deriving its support from vertical force produced by horizontally rotating airfoils or vanes.

runway. A hard-surfaced area or landing strip for landing or take-off.

safety belt. A belt or strap used to hold a pilot or passenger in his seat.

seaplane. Often used vaguely for aircraft capable of alighting on water. Strictly, an airplane with floats instead of wheels.

short snorter. One who has crossed the ocean by air. Such a person usually carries a dollar bill to which he attaches currency notes from various foreign countries.

sky writing. The forming of letters or symbols in the air by a trail of smoke or vapor from an aircraft.

solo flight. A flight in which the pilot is the sole operator of the controls.

stick. Slang for control stick, or vertical lever operating the control surfaces of a plane. Fore-and-aft movement oper-

- ates the elevators and side-to-side movement operates the ailerons.
- stratosphere.** The upper regions of the atmosphere in which there are no clouds or strong vertical air currents. Usually about 35,000 feet.
- take-off.** The process by which an airplane leaves the ground to become air-borne.
- taxi.** To move aircraft under its own power on the ground or water, for example, from the hangar to the take-off point.
- trainer.** An airplane used in training student pilots.
- turret.** A structure projecting beyond the body of a military aircraft which serves as an enclosure for a gun and a gunner.
- zoom.** To climb for a short time at an angle greater than the normal climbing angle.

SPORTS TERMS

- All-American.** Member of a team selected by sports writers and other experts and felt to include the best players of the season.
- backfield.** The *backs* in a football game, known as the quarterback, fullback, and halfbacks whose regular position is behind the line of scrimmage.
- bag.** Or *sack*. Term for a square canvas bag of sawdust or other filling indicating the position of first, second, and third base in baseball.
- bagger.** In baseball a hit good for a certain number of bases, as a *one-bagger*, *two-bagger*, etc.
- ball game.** In America this means a baseball game.
- barber.** In baseball, a player who talks a great deal.
- baseball.** The American national game, played with bat and ball by two sides of nine players each. Similar to but more highly developed than the British game of *rounders*.

- basketball.** A popular game invented by James Naismith in 1891, involving efforts of opposing teams to toss a ball through a "basket" or elevated ring.
- bench.** The bench is a place where reserve players sit during a game. *To bench* a player is to remove him from the game because of poor playing.
- birdie.** In golf, a score of one stroke less than par on a hole.
- bleachers.** A roofless set of benches for spectators on an athletic field. Seats in the bleachers are usually the least expensive.
- bonehead.** A slang term for a stupid action, which began in baseball jargon. Also its extension, *boner*, meaning an error in judgment.
- bookie.** Short for *bookmaker*, a person who *makes book* or takes bets on sporting events, generally racing.
- box score.** A detailed tabulation of the events of a game, particularly baseball.
- bush league.** In baseball, a minor league of professional or semi-professional players.
- cauliflower ear.** In boxing, an ear deformed by injury and resembling a cauliflower.
- champ.** Colloquial for *champion*.
- coach.** An instructor, amateur or professional, such as one who trains a football or track team. *To coach* in baseball means to direct a player such as a base-runner, from the sidelines.
- daily double.** In racing, a bet on a specified pair of races, generally the first and second.
- dash.** In racing, especially in foot racing, a short swift run such as the *hundred-yard dash*.
- diamond.** In baseball, the infield, or diamond-shaped area the corners of which are occupied by the four bases. *Diamond* may also be used to refer to the game of baseball itself.

- down.** In football, an interruption in play because the ball has touched the ground.
- first string.** Pertaining to the best players or members of the *first team*.
- fly.** In baseball, a ball hit high into the air.
- football.** The modern game as played by college and professional teams involves two teams of eleven men each. It is a development of Rugby football.
- forward pass.** In football, the throwing of the ball in the direction of the opponents' goal, from behind the line of scrimmage. It may be completed, knocked down, or intercepted.
- foul.** In most sports an act committed contrary to the rules of the game, involving a penalty to the player or team. In baseball, a ball so hit that it does not travel within the boundary of the diamond.
- gate.** The number of persons who pass through the entrance gate at a sporting event. Hence, the attendance at such an event. Also the amount of money taken in.
- grandstand.** The principal structure seating the spectators at a race course or athletic field. The verb *to grandstand* mean "to show off" in order to win applause from the spectators.
- gridiron.** Colloquial term for the football field because of the parallel lines crossing the field. Also a generic term for football.
- half.** Rest period halfway through a game. *Half* is also short for *halfback*, one of the players in the backfield in football.
- haymaker.** In boxing, a wild swing.
- hit.** In baseball, a stroke by which the ball is hit with the result that a player advances or scores.
- hockey.** A game in which two parties of players equipped with sticks curved at the end try to drive a ball or disk (called the *puck*) through opposite goals. *Field hockey*

requires two teams of eleven players each; *ice hockey* requires two teams of six players each.

holdout. A baseball player who refuses to sign a contract with the idea of obtaining better terms.

homer. Colloquial for a *home run*, a hit enabling one to make a complete circuit of the bases.

infield. The diamond-shaped part of the baseball field. The first, second, and third basemen and the shortstop are also referred to as the *infield*. See *diamond*.

inning. In baseball, the alternate turns at bat of the team.

intramural sports. Athletic events in which the players are all from the same school or college.

jockey. In racing, a rider of a horse. In baseball, a player who "rides" or taunts the opposing team.

K.O. Short for *knockout*; in boxing a decision reached when a participant is knocked down or knocked unconscious for a count of ten. Sometimes written as *kayo*.

lawn tennis. The game introduced from England in about 1874. Strictly, *lawn tennis* is played on a grass-covered court. Other playing areas are covered with a clay mixture or asphalt.

league. A combination of several teams who compete with each other during the season for the championship, for example the American League or the National League in baseball.

line. A demarcation with reference to which a game is conducted, such as the *goal line* in football or the *back-line* in tennis. *Line* in football also refers to the scrimmage line or to the players whose usual positions are at the line of scrimmage: center, guards, tackles, and ends.

manager. In some professional sports, like baseball, the person in charge of the strategy and general conduct of a team. In collegiate sports, an undergraduate who assists with the non-athletic details of a team.

- miniature golf.** An abbreviated form of golf; a short-lived pastime almost restricted to the year 1930, when there were 30,000 courses in the country.
- on the ball.** In sports a player who is *on the ball* is alert. So used colloquially in general.
- out.** In baseball, when a player is forced to end his attempt to get to a base or to score he is *out*.
- outfield.** The area behind the diamond or infield; also the players collectively who play there: the left, center, and right fielders.
- par.** The number of strokes in golf required for a hole to be played perfectly. A hole may be played *in par*, *under par*, or *above par*. The last two terms are used generally to refer to deviations from a norm, especially in health.
- pari-mutuel.** A form of betting on horse-races in which those betting on the winner share the total stakes, minus a small percentage held by the management.
- pennant.** Flag symbolizing the championship in professional baseball.
- photo finish.** In a close horse race a camera records the finish, and the winner is decided after the photograph has been examined. Hence, a close race. Used generally for any close contest.
- pigskin.** Colloquial term for a football.
- plate.** Term for the home base in baseball, usually a five-sided piece of hard rubber set into the ground. In horse-racing, plate means a prize given to a winner; also a contest for a prize.
- polo.** A game played on horseback by two teams of four men each, in which players attempt to drive a ball through a goal by means of mallets with long flexible handles. The game is of Oriental origin and was introduced in this country by James Gordon Bennett about 1890.
- prelim.** Colloquial for *preliminary*, a match that precedes the main boxing event.

- press box.** A space reserved at an athletic event for members of the press.
- professional.** Or *pro*. One who engages in a sport for gain or for a livelihood. Opposed to *amateur*.
- pug.** Short for pugilist.
- referee.** An umpire or judge of certain points in a game. In football, the referee is concerned primarily with the progress of the ball on the field and the *umpire* with the conduct of the players.
- ring.** A canvas-covered square in which boxing matches are fought. Also, a general term for boxing.
- roller skating.** Skating on skates mounted on small wheels as a pastime.
- run.** In baseball, the completion of a circuit of the bases; in some games, a succession of successful shots.
- scribe.** Colloquial for a sports writer.
- scrub team.** A team other than the regular or first team.
- semi-pro.** Short for *semi-professional*; baseball games for which players are paid, but which are not organized on a league basis.
- shut out.** A game in which one side fails to score.
- slugfest.** A boxing match in which the opponents trade many damaging blows.
- soupbone.** Baseball slang for the pitching arm.
- southpaw.** Slang for a left-handed player or person.
- sparring partner.** One who gives a boxer practice by opposing him in informal matches.
- spectator sports.** Sporting events at which there are large groups of onlookers.
- spike.** One of the three metal projections on a baseball player's shoe which prevent his slipping.
- sprint.** A short distance race.
- Sunday punch.** A boxer's best and consequently most damaging blow, which he uses sparingly.

- Texas leaguer.** In baseball, a ball hit safely just beyond the infielders and in front of the outfielders. Probably derived from the fact that in the Texas leagues the outfields were so large that the outfielders had to play far back, making it impossible for them to catch balls hit just beyond the infield.
- title-holder.** A champion or one who holds a record in sports.
- to the showers.** A player removed from a game such as baseball is said to be *sent to the showers* if he is not to be returned to the game.
- touchdown.** A score in football, in which the ball crosses the goal line.
- track meet.** An athletic meeting involving running, jumping, and weight-throwing competitions.
- training table.** A special table for members of a team who are required to regulate their diet.
- trotting-match.** A race run by trotting horses which draw two-wheeled vehicles called *sulkies*.
- umpire.** See *referee*.
- up.** In baseball, a batter at the plate is *up*. In racing, a jockey riding a particular horse is *up*.
- varsity.** Colloquial for the first team in college sports. From the eighteenth-century shortening and pronunciation of *university*.
- win, place, show.** Terms used in horse-racing, to mean finish in first, second, or third place.
- World Series.** In baseball, the games played after the end of the regular season between the winners of the American and National League pennants.

TERMS FROM RECREATION AND GAMES

- admissions tax.** Excise tax on patrons of amusement and recreational places.

- amusement park.** An enclosed tract of land set apart for recreation; usually privately owned.
- ante.** A term from poker: the stake of a player put into the pool after he sees his hand but before he draws other cards. The expression *to ante up* also means "to pay."
- ballroom.** A room set apart for dancing.
- barn dance.** A country frolic featuring square dances, formerly held in barns.
- beach.** General term for the seashore, especially in the summer months. The comparable term in England is the *seaside*. Compare *mountains*.
- bicycle.** Or *bike*. High-wheeled bicycles were introduced in 1876. The sport of bicycling became immensely popular in the 1890's after the bicycle had been improved and equipped with pneumatic tires.
- billiard parlor.** Or *billiard academy*. An establishment equipped with tables for billiards.
- bingo.** A variation of the game of lotto, played with numbered cards.
- boardwalk.** A promenade along a beach in a resort town.
- bridle path.** A path, usually in a park, open only to saddle horses.
- cakewalk.** A kind of contest at country fairs, the prize being a cake.
- church social.** An informal gathering or party designed to promote sociability among church members. Formerly called a *sociable*.
- clam bake.** A social gathering at which clams are baked and eaten. Now applied to other kinds of social gatherings as well.
- contract bridge.** A rather involved kind of bridge game that has replaced the older auction bridge.
- country club.** A club in or near the country for town people given to outdoor sports, especially golf.

- craps.** A gambling game played with two dice; also called *crap shooting*.
- crossword puzzle.** A pattern of white and black spaces of which the white spaces are to be filled in with letters that form words vertically and horizontally to agree with accompanying definitions.
- dance hall.** A public hall or room in which dances are held.
- fair grounds.** An enclosure where circuses, outdoor fairs, carnivals, and the like are held.
- faro.** A card game involving bets on the next card taken from the dealing box. The name may be derived from a *Pharaoh*, whose picture used to appear on one of the cards.
- fourflusher.** One who "bluffs." Especially in poker, one who has four cards of one suit but lacks the fifth of the same suit. Five cards of one suit constitute a flush.
- foxtrot.** A ballroom dance, in four-four time, in which running or trotting steps are involved as well as slow walking steps.
- grab bag.** A bag at amusement places and fairs from which one extracts something without knowing what one is getting.
- hayride.** A form of rural entertainment, involving an excursion in a wagon partly filled with hay.
- house party.** Social gathering of guests at a home, usually for the week-end; or at a college fraternity in connection with an important football game.
- in the chips.** A person is in the chips when he is well off financially at the moment. *Chips* are colored counters used in poker.
- jazz.** Popular dance music resembling ragtime but more elaborate and sophisticated.
- jitterbug.** One who is devoted to the latest dance crazes.
- jive.** Term for certain modern dance music.

- juke box.** An elaborate phonograph in which records are played by inserting a coin; used in public buildings such as lunch-rooms and small dance halls.
- monte.** Or *monte bank*. Spanish-American gambling game played with a Spanish pack of cards.
- mountains.** A term for a vacation region in the mountains.
- National Park.** An area containing natural curiosities withdrawn from settlement and reserved for public enjoyment by the Federal Government.
- outing.** A trip or an excursion.
- picnic.** An excursion or pleasure party in which the members of the group bring their own food and eat it in the open air. Also, colloquially has the sense of "an easy time, a cinch."
- poker face.** Colloquial term for an inscrutable face, such as that traditionally associated with an expert poker player.
- pool hall.** Or *poolroom*. A public room in which pool may be played. The term has a more or less unsavory connotation because of the betting on races and other sports which is often carried on.
- sightseeing.** The pastime of seeing the sights, such as an excursion through a city on a special bus during which an announcer points out the places of interest.
- slot machine.** A gambling device on the order of the coin vending machine.
- square dance.** A set dance, in which dancers are arranged in the form of a square, men and women facing each other. Square dances are traditionally associated with rural districts.
- summer resort.** Place frequented by holiday visitors.
- swing.** A musical form representing a return to the free improvising of earliest jazz.
- tavern.** (1) A house where wines and liquors are sold to be consumed on the premises. (2) A hotel, especially in the rural regions.

- taxi dancer.** A girl in a public dance hall who dances with a man in exchange for a ticket which he has purchased from the management.
- virginia reel.** A country dance involving a number of persons.
- wheel.** Colloquial for *bicycle*.

MOTION PICTURE TERMS

- Academy Award.** Annual award of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for excellence in various branches of film making. See *Oscar*.
- adaptation.** A scenario based on a work in another literary form.
- animated cartoon.** A film consisting of a series of drawings in which the figures appear to move in a lifelike manner.
- bank night.** During the depression of the 1930's theaters often provided games of chance such as Screeno for their patrons. The night when such games were run was called *bank night*.
- biograph.** Trade-mark for an early kind of moving-picture recorder and projector.
- bit player.** One who has only small parts in a film.
- B-picture.** A picture produced on a comparatively small budget (in contrast to the expensive or A-pictures) and generally of inferior quality.
- cinema.** Motion pictures collectively (*the cinema*). In America, the terms *movies* and *pictures* are preferred.
- nematograph.** A motion-picture projector. Now chiefly British.
- close-up.** Picture of a character or a portion of a scene taken with the camera moved closer than for the main part of the film.
- diorama.** Exhibition of views from different parts of the world reflected from mirrors and seen through a lens (1811).

- credits.** Names of those persons associated with the making of a film, especially those who had to do with photography, costumes, music, and the like. *Credits* are generally listed at the beginning of a picture.
- diorama.** Series of paintings arranged for spectacular exhibition. By use of cloth transparencies and lights, alterations in the pictures are produced in view of the spectators.
- documentary film.** An educational film based upon some actual occurrence or condition, such as soil conservation or the building of a great dam.
- dolly.** A small wheeled truck used to move a camera. A shot recorded in this way is called a *dolly shot*.
- double feature.** Two full-length motion pictures on the same program.
- dub.** To add dialogue or sound to a film after the camera has recorded the scenes.
- edit.** To arrange lengths of film in some unified way so as to present an intelligible motion picture to the spectator.
- extra.** An actor employed by the day for a small part.
- fade in.** The gradual appearance of a picture on the screen. A *fade out* is the reverse.
- featured player.** Actor or actress portraying one of the principal roles in a picture. Distinguished from a star (*q.v.*) in that a featured player's name is generally listed after the name of a picture, while a star's precedes it.
- feature picture.** The principal film on the program.
- flashback.** An interruption in the progress of a film in order to present something that occurred earlier.
- georama.** A hollow globe on the inside of which are representations of the earth's natural divisions, to be viewed from within.
- graphophone.** Trade-mark name of an instrument for recording and reproducing sounds. A kind of phonograph.

- Hays Office.** Colloquial term for the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, the regulatory body of the motion picture industry. So named for Will H. Hays, its first president.
- horse opera.** Slang for a western picture in which cowboys and horses figure prominently.
- kinetoscope.** Motion-picture camera or machine for projecting motion pictures. The suffix *-scope* is often used in other combinations; for example in *Vitascope* and *Phantoscope*.
- lot.** A film studio and its adjoining territory; from the fact that many early films were made in the open air.
- movie mogul.** Slang for a prominent producer of motion pictures.
- moving picture.** (1) A panorama or pictorial view or exhibition in which objects move by mechanical control (1715). (2) Series of pictures projected on a screen in rapid succession, giving the impression of movement (1898).
- newsreel.** A reel of motion pictures portraying current events.
- nickelodeon.** Moving picture show charging five cents admission (1888-1908), or a place of amusement charging no admission, equipped with automatic machines such as cinematographs, graphophones, and the like which may be used for a small charge (1913).
- on location.** At a place outside a studio, where a picture or part of it is filmed.
- Oscar.** Colloquial for the small statue symbolic of the Academy Award (*q.v.*).
- panorama.** A long picture which is exhibited by being rolled out a part at a time (1854). In modern film parlance, *panorama* designates a special kind of camera shot in which the camera is turned slowly to right or left. It is sometimes shortened to *pan*.
- peep show.** Exhibition of pictures or objects, seen through a peephole or magnifying glass.

penny arcade. See *nickelodeon*.

preview. An advance showing of a film before it is seen by the general public.

print. The reverse of negative film which is run through the projector at showings.

process shot. A scene or part of a scene in a film which is the result of special work on the film negative. Also a shot taken against a background which is itself a projection of a film scene. An example of the former is the simultaneous appearance of one actor as two characters; of the latter, a scene in a railroad car with scenery rushing past the window.

producer. One who is in charge of the making of a motion picture.

projector. Short for *motion-picture projector* or *cinematograph*, a machine for projecting motion pictures on a screen.

quickie. A film is called a *quickie* if it is made rapidly and inexpensively.

reel. About 1,000 feet of film. Pictures are designated as being of so many reels, as a *two reeler*.

scenario. The scene-by-scene story of the plot of a motion picture, giving instructions for the actors and positions for the camera.

screen play. Scenario.

screen test. The process of estimating the ability of a prospective actor by having him appear briefly in short film sequences.

sequence. A large unit of a film. The equivalent of an act in a play.

serial. A continued film story, separate parts being presented at regular intervals such as once a week.

shoot. Verb used colloquially to mean "to take pictures with a motion-picture camera." A portion of a film made without interruption is called familiarly a shot.

- short.** Colloquial for a short picture, less than feature length, often educational.
- sound stage.** The studio on which a sound picture is shot.
- stage show.** Entertainment such as vaudeville acts presented in conjunction with moving pictures.
- stand-in.** A person who stands in the position to be occupied by an actor while preliminary arrangements such as lighting are being made.
- star.** Main actor or actress in a picture. Most American films are made under the *star system*; that is films are written to suit the particular talents of a star. See *featured player*.
- stereopticon.** Improved type of projector or magic lantern used for viewing still pictures.
- still.** An individual photograph of a scene in a motion picture, often used for advertising.
- studio.** The place where moving pictures are made. Also a company which produces films.
- synchronization.** The adding of sound effects or dialogue in time and harmony with the action of a picture.
- talkie.** Colloquial for *talking-picture*, or *sound film*.
- technicolor film.** A film in natural colors instead of in black and white.
- title.** Or *subtitle*. Words appearing on the screen in explanation of the action of a photoplay. In silent pictures, dialogue is represented by titles.
- trailer.** An advertisement for a forthcoming motion picture consisting of selected portions of the film with accompanying explanations.
- travelogue.** A film descriptive of travel. Formerly an illustrated lecture.
- Vitascope.** Early form of motion picture or the machine used in making it.
- western.** A picture having its scene laid in western United States and usually with cowboys for the principal characters.

WORDS FROM RADIO AND TELEVISION

- adaptation.** A term used to cover the process of presenting a radio version of a book, play, film, or the like.
- ad lib.** To extemporize words and lines not in the script or music not in the score.
- announcer.** A person who identifies a station, delivers the *commercial* (*q.v.*), and who often serves as master of ceremonies during the presentation of a program.
- audition.** A preliminary hearing of a speaker or musical performer or a program.
- broadcasting.** Dissemination of communication, especially programs, by radio, the broadcasts being intended for public reception.
- commentator.** One who presents his own opinions of news events or special activities on a radio program.
- commercial.** A sales talk given in behalf of the sponsor of a program.
- commercial communications.** The transmission of photographs, documents, and the like as well as messages as part of maritime, police, and aviation services.
- continuity.** The written form of a radio program.
- crooner.** Popular term for a male radio singer, especially of current love songs.
- disk.** Or *disc*. A thin "wafer" or record upon which a sound track is made. Disks range in diameter from 8-16 inches. When played they reproduce the effect of the original.
- disk jockey.** Colloquial term for one who presents a program of transcribed music, filling in the time between records with comments or advertising.
- dolly.** The movable crane or platform of the television camera.
- electronics.** The branch of physics which utilizes electron tubes of various types to produce electrical currents.
- frequency modulation.** Often called FM. A kind of broadcasting providing exceptionally good reception over an

- area limited usually to twice the radius from the transmitter to the horizon.
- ghost.** A flaw in a television picture, such as an unwanted image resulting from signal reflection.
- guest star.** A special performer, often one who is usually to be heard on another program.
- ham.** An amateur broadcaster. Really poor actors are also called *hams*. As a verb, *to ham* means to overact.
- hook-up.** The process by which a number of separate stations over a wide area are joined for the presentation of a program.
- hour.** A popular term for a radio program of varying duration, especially one presented at the same time once a week.
- identification.** The statement made over the air at regular intervals identifying the station or the broadcasting system.
- ike.** A name for the iconoscope, the tube in the television camera which converts a light image into an electrical signal.
- independent station.** A radio station not owned by but often affiliated with a network.
- interference.** Whatever interferes with proper reception; for example, static or local electrical disturbances.
- jam session.** Lively ad lib renditions of popular dance tunes.
- key station.** Point of origin of a network's principal programs.
- kill.** Verb meaning to omit all or part of a program.
- microphone.** Instrument for intensifying sounds or for transmitting sounds by converting them into electrical impulses.
- mobile unit.** A truck or trailer using transmitting apparatus to relay programs from distant points to the studio.

monitor. The loudspeaker in the control room by means of which a program may be heard. *Monitor* is sometimes used as a verb.

network. A chain of individual stations.

news analyst. A person who interprets the news over the air rather than merely reports it.

newscast. A program of news.

on the air. The period during which a broadcast is being transmitted.

on the nose. Said of a program that concludes exactly on the planned second.

P.A. Public address. A loudspeaker wire system used in parks, airports, factories, etc.

pick up. (1) Point of origin of a broadcast. (2) Verb meaning to pick up a scene with a television camera and transmit it. (3) The tone arm of a phonograph, which holds the needle.

playback. The playing of a recording immediately after it is made, for reference purposes.

plug. Term for the commercial announcement or mention of someone's name over the air.

program. A radio presentation (usually fifteen minutes to an hour in duration) which may consist of orchestra, song, drama, symphony, opera, variety, literature, science, politics, news, sports, or special events.

quiz program. A colloquial term for a program during which persons attempt to answer questions, usually to win prizes.

rebroadcast. To broadcast (signals, programs, or other material) while receiving the same from another source, or to broadcast by transcription a program heard originally at another time.

recording. See *transcription*.

- repeat.** A second presentation of a studio program for stations not receiving the original broadcast because of time differences.
- scan.** The process in television whereby a light image becomes an electrical signal.
- script.** Manuscript or typescript read by a radio performer.
- serial.** A series of radio programs telling a continued story.
- short wave.** A hertzian wave of 60-meter wave length or less.
- signal.** A station's signal is the sound heard in the radio receiver.
- signature.** The music or other sound effect regularly identifying a program.
- soap opera.** Popular term for serial programs much appreciated by housewives. So called because many such programs are sponsored by manufacturers of soap products.
- sound effects man.** Person who produces mechanically the background sounds considered necessary to a realistic presentation.
- speaker.** Short for *loudspeaker*.
- sponsor.** A person or organization (usually engaged in wholesale or retail sale of merchandise) who pays the costs of presenting a radio program.
- station.** A radio-broadcasting unit. There are over 900 stations in the United States.
- studio.** A special sound-proof room for broadcasting.
- sustaining program.** A program provided at its own expense by a broadcasting company during a period not sold for commercial purposes.
- telecast.** The television equivalent of the term *broadcast*.
- television.** A communication device for projecting images to a distant point by radio.
- televisor.** The television camera.
- theme.** See *signature*.

transcription. A copy or transcript. Reproduction over a radio system of some material previously prepared especially for the purpose, as in the form of a record.

tuning. Adjusting the radio receiving apparatus to resonance with the frequency of a particular transmitting station from which signals are to be received.

video. Loosely used to refer to television.

wave length. The distance in the line of advance of a wave from any one point to the next point at which, at the same instant, there is the same phase.

Colloquialisms and Slang

MUCH of the vitality of the American language comes from its abundance of colloquialisms and slang terms and the frequency with which these are used in everyday speech. Our colloquialisms and slang terms (conveniently called *slanguage* by one inventive writer) probably run into the thousands, and the store of such terms is continually being replenished with new ones devised to replace those that have passed into more formal speech and those that have passed out of use. Americans for more than one hundred years have shown an undeniable fondness for colloquial language and slang. They have not only coined vast numbers of such terms, but they have shown a greater willingness to admit these terms into more respectable use than have the speakers of most other languages. In this chapter we shall examine some of the characteristics of American colloquialisms and slang and list some of the most common and interesting terms.

COLLOQUIALISMS

Colloquial is an adjective which is applied to words and phrases to indicate that they are associated primarily with conversation and informal talk, rather than with written discourse. Certain pronunciations, as well as individual words and phrases, are labeled colloquial. It must be remembered that colloquial speech may be, and often is, just as correct as formal speech. Most people admit two standards of usage: one literary and the other colloquial. Good taste is the controlling principle. Thoughtful speakers and writers try to make their language appropriate to the occasion, to the subject-matter, and to the listener or reader. It is not always a compliment to say that a man "talks like a book."

The colloquial standard is not easy to define, largely because there appear to be different levels of colloquialism. Some colloquialisms are scarcely to be distinguished from formal speech; for example, *tantrum*, meaning a fit of ill temper, or *to head for*, originally a nautical term, now used frequently to mean "go in the direction of." Other terms are felt at once to be not appropriate in formal contexts; for example, *step on the gas*, meaning "to increase speed," or *get one's goat*, meaning "to annoy or irritate." Below this level, many expressions shade off into slang, and the labeling of such terms becomes a real problem. The word *tycoon*, meaning an important figure in the world of business, will be felt by some to be merely colloquial, whereas many will call it slang. If *fourflusher*, a term drawn from poker, is to be regarded as colloquial, are we to put a similar label on *tinhorn*?

In the lists of colloquialisms that follow, we have attempted to show some of the distinctive traits of the colloquial standard of usage and we have omitted terms drawn from occupations and activities which appear to have only limited use outside those special fields. The arrangement of material is intended to show, roughly at least, how colloquialisms develop.

(1) Colloquialisms make extensive use of elliptical, slurred, clipped, and abbreviated expressions. Their informality often makes them appropriate to the occasion but they are generally regarded as improper in formal written discourse. A few examples will illustrate:

CONTRACTIONS: couldn't, didn't, haven't, I'll, he'll, they're, mustn't

ABBREVIATIONS: O.K., okay, doc, prof, gym, math, champ, gas, ad lib, co-ed

(2) Colloquialisms make use of certain all-purpose words:

a lot of. A great deal, a large amount.

awful. An intensive meaning "very."

fix. As a verb, *fix* means "repair"; as a noun, *fix* means "any unpleasant situation."

- frightfully.** An intensive meaning "extremely" or "very."
funny. Odd, unusual, strange, mysterious.
nice. Pleasant, agreeable, charming, comfortable, delicious, seasonable, interesting, friendly.
no good. An adjective meaning "worthless."
terrible. An all-purpose adjective suggesting something undesirable.

(3) Colloquialisms admit of expressions which are faintly ungrammatical or lacking in the precision required of formal English:

- all the farther.** The standard expression is *as far as*.
blame it on. Not "it" but a person or thing should be blamed; *e.g.*, They *blamed him* for it.
contrary. Informally, *contrary* has come to mean "obstinate" whereas purists insist that it should mean only "opposite."
crowd. Colloquially, *crowd* is often used to mean "a small, intimate group."
every which way. Means "confused" or "hopelessly involved."
expect. As a colloquialism, the verb *expect* means "believe, think, suppose"; in written discourse it should mean "consider (one) . . . in duty bound."
locate. Colloquial intransitive verb meaning "to settle (in a region); to take up residence."
mad. Familiarly used to mean "angry" rather than "insane."
mean. Often used to suggest that a person is selfish, malicious, or irritable.
most. A colloquialism for "almost."
nowhere near. Colloquially used to mean "not nearly."
out loud. In formal writing, *aloud* is the preferred term.

over with. Means "over." The word *with* is regarded as superfluous in formal English.

put in. Verb meaning "to spend"; e.g., "They *put in* the whole morning studying."

quite a few. A good many.

shape. Colloquial for "condition," as in the expression *in good shape*.

take in. (1) Colloquial for "attend" (the theater, etc.); (2) Colloquial for "deceive."

take on. Familiar expression meaning "to make an excessive display of one's feelings, especially of sorrow."

taking. Adjective meaning "captivating," as in the phrase *taking ways*.

through. Colloquial for "finished."

worst way. Colloquial for "very much."

(4) Colloquialisms often involve an extension of the literal meaning of a term by real or fancied resemblance to something else. Many have now lost all connection with the original source:

acid test. The *acid test* was originally a chemical means of distinguishing real gold from spurious. In colloquial usage it has come to mean "any decisive test."

back water. Once a nautical expression, it now means "to hedge" or "to retract."

blow over. Sailors said that a storm would *blow over*, meaning that the weather would clear; landsmen now use the term to mean that something will come to be forgotten or will lose its importance.

buffalo. As a colloquialism, *to buffalo* means "to dismay, to confuse, to render helpless."

clean sweep. Sailors spoke of the washing overboard of movable articles as a *clean sweep*. Colloquially

it means "a fresh start, after getting rid of everything."

clear the track. To remove obstacles; probably a railroad expression originally.

cut no ice. To amount to little or nothing. Probably from ice-skating, especially figure-skating.

dark horse. The racing term *dark horse*, a little-known horse that wins unexpectedly, has come into general colloquial use, especially in politics, to mean "an unexpected winner."

doldrums. Low spirits; the "dumps." From a nautical term for a belt of calm, rainy weather at the equator.

fly off the handle. To become angry suddenly; probably referred originally to an ax-head flying off the handle with disastrous results.

hail from. Colloquially used to mean "come from." From the sea-term: e.g., a ship *hails from* her port of registry.

hillbilly. Used rather generally to mean "a rustic" or "hayseed." Originally applied to a southern mountaineer.

horse sense. Colloquial for "common sense."

in a jam. Means "in trouble"; perhaps borrowed from the *log jam* of loggers.

pass the buck. Colloquial term meaning "to shift responsibility." This was originally a term from card-playing. In poker a *buck* or counter passes to the winner of each jack-pot.

spin a yarn. To tell a story or chat aimlessly. Sailors were in the habit of talking endlessly while making spun yarn from untwisted yarns of rope.

stymied. Blocked or impeded. A golf term referring to the situation of your opponent's ball lying on the green between your ball and the hole.

third degree. Police term for severe examination or treatment of a prisoner to obtain information; now used loosely.

wire pulling. A term borrowed from puppeteering; puppets are manipulated by wires or strings. In colloquial usage the term means "to bring secret influence to bear upon someone."

(5) Colloquialisms make use of idiomatic expressions; that is, single words or combinations of ordinary words to form new and special meanings:

all in. Extremely tired; worn out.

bawl out. Reprimand sharply and thoroughly.

dead broke. At the end of one's financial resources.

double cross. Verb meaning "to betray or cheat." The term came into use first in connection with a prize-fighter who tries to win after agreeing to lose.

down and out. Helpless and hopeless.

fall for. Become suddenly infatuated with.

frame (up). To prearrange something so that an innocent person will be accused.

go overboard for. A more modern version of *fall for* (*q.v.*).

high and dry. Deserted or powerless; originally a nautical term meaning "aground."

put (it) over on someone. Get something done or accepted in spite of opposition, or to deceive.

save face. To preserve appearances.

size up. To form a judgment of.

(6) Colloquialisms have always drawn heavily upon the jargon of the various occupations, trades, sports and the semi-technical language of close-knit groups such as students, soldiers, and pro-

fessional men. Many of the terms already listed can be explained in this way, but there are others that might be mentioned:

ace in the hole. Term borrowed from poker; used to suggest possession of something which will prove decisive.

ante up. Another poker term, used loosely to mean "pay up."

below the belt. Term from prize-fighting, used to mean unfair or underhanded.

blitz. From the Second World War. German *blitz* (*krieg*) or "lightning war" has come to be applied to any sudden and ferocious attack.

complex. A precise term in psychology, now used loosely to suggest any exaggerated fear.

ersatz. German for "substitute." Substances described as *ersatz* are felt to be inferior imitations.

hand. The theatrical term *hand* for "applause" has come into general colloquial use.

in the cards. Inevitable; a term borrowed from card-playing.

monopoly. A business term used not very precisely to suggest any sort of exclusive control.

moron. *Moron* to a psychologist means a person with an I.Q. of 50 to 69, mental age 7 to 12 years. Now is a common colloquialism for any person felt to be deficient mentally.

no dice. Term from dice-playing, used to mean "the rules are off" or "the rules have been violated." Now extended to mean "nothing doing."

park. Term from motoring meaning "to stop and keep a motor vehicle standing for some time on a public thoroughfare or elsewhere." The term has been extended, as in the expression: "She *parked* her small son at her neighbor's."

play ball with. Cooperate; borrowed from baseball language.

two strikes on him. Working under a decided handicap; another expression borrowed from baseball.

upstage. Snobbish or standoffish. In theatrical parlance, "toward the back of the stage." In early theaters, the rear was higher than the front.

SLANG

Slang may be defined as language which is in deliberate violation of conventional language, and which is created without restraint from any verbal material which is available. The origin of the word *slang* is in doubt, but there is reason to believe that it was itself originally a slang term. The first users of slang were probably thieves, who invented new words and added new meanings to old ones so that their language could not be readily understood by outsiders. The underworld is still an important source of slang, as witness the slang meaning of words like *chisel*, *rod*, *gat*, *gun moll*, *G-man*, *ice*, *hot*, *grand*. Undoubtedly the desire for secrecy is still an important factor with our modern creators of slang, but there is another function that slang serves which ought to be recognized. Knowledge of and use of a particular slang vocabulary noticeably act to set its users apart from others and helps to identify them as a group. Among the most fecund inventors of slang today are adolescents who express part of their natural feeling of revolt by devising terms which their elders do not understand. At the same time this more or less esoteric language helps to identify them as members of a particular age group and to set them off from other groups. And when some of their terms are taken up generally, they are quick to replace them with new ones. The young adult is often dismayed to find that the slang which he used only a few years ago has been replaced by new terms which he cannot understand. The *flivver* of one decade gives way to the *jalopy* of another, and the person who uses the former when the latter is current only betrays the fact that the slang parade has passed him by.

In the remaining pages of this chapter we outline some of the characteristics of American slang and list some of the more common slang terms.

(1) Slang has a large store of synonyms, as the following examples will indicate.

TERMS FOR MONEY

beans	kale	simoleons
brass	mazuma	spondulix
the bucks	moolah	sugar
the chips	the needful	velvet
do-re-mi	potatoes	what it takes
dough	shekels	wherewithal
jack		

TERMS FOR INTOXICATION

blotto	lit	potted
boozy	orie-eyed	stewed
cockeyed	pickled	stinko
fried	pie-eyed	tight
high	plastered	under the table

TERMS FOR PHYSICAL ATTACK

baste	let fly at
beat the tar out of	move in on
bust loose on	pile into
give a working over	shellac
go to work on	skin alive
knock the stuffing out of	sock
lambaste	tear into
larrup	wallop
lay into	whale

TERMS FOR *Foolish, Stupid, Insane*

balmy	dizzy	not all there
bats	dopey	nuts
batty	dotty	off the beam
blockheaded	fat-headed	screwy
booby	ga-ga	slap-happy
bughouse	goofy	touched in the head
crackpot	loony	wacky
cuckoo	nitwit	

INDEFINITE NAMES

contraption	gadget	thingamajig
dingus	thingamabob	whatchamacallit
doodad		

TERMS FOR *Get Out*

beat it	scat	take a walk
blow	scram	take it on the lam
hit the road	skip	travel

TERMS FOR *Woman*

babe	femme	skirt
dame	frail	tomato
doll	moll	

(2) Many terms are on the borderline between colloquialism and slang. The following are samples of the vast number of coinages and dialectal adaptations.

babe. Slang for *girl*.

bender. A drunken spree.

binge. See *bender*.

blurb. Coined by Gellert Burgess to indicate a fulsome advertisement.

- bud.** Short for *buddy*; familiar term of address to a stranger.
- critter.** Distortion of *creature*; term used especially in the West for an animal, usually a cow.
- cuss.** Variation of *curse*. *Cussedness* is a popular term for perversity or obstinacy.
- dope.** Slang term for "fool" or "idiot." Also means "confidential information."
- flunk.** School term for "fail to pass (an examination)." To *flunk out* means "to be dropped for poor scholarship."
- gat.** A gun.
- grand.** A thousand dollars.
- gun moll.** A female gangster.
- hunk.** Large morsel.
- ice.** Jewelry, especially diamonds.
- nix.** From the German *nichts*: means "No."
- pep.** Vim, vigor.
- rile.** Dialectal distortion of *roil*, "to ruffle, to disturb (the temper)."
- rod.** A gun.
- sap.** Short for *saphead*, an uncomplimentary term for a stupid person.
- sassy.** Distortion of *saucy*. The noun *sass* is often used to mean "impertinence."
- scram.** A modern coinage used as a command, equivalent to "Get out!"
- snuck.** Unconventional past tense of *sneak*, as in "He *snuck* out of the room last night."
- whiz.** Term meaning "someone unusually good."
- whoopee.** Boisterousness.
- wow.** A great success.
- zoom.** To move at a high speed; a term borrowed from aviation and used loosely.

(3) As with colloquialisms, many slang terms begin as extensions of ordinary expressions:

- all washed up.** Completely finished and done for.
- breaks, get the.** Have critical situations determined favorably. The term probably began in connection with billiards or ten-pins.
- buggy.** This early American term for a specific sort of horse-drawn carriage has been extended to cover an automobile, when referred to familiarly.
- butt.** Has come to mean principally "cigarette-end."
- crack.** Verb used in certain circles to mean *solve*, as in "The police hope to *crack* the case." Also a noun meaning "a remark."
- doll.** Inelegant term for girl or woman.
- dumb.** Unintelligent.
- finagle.** Earlier *fainaigue*: to revoke at cards; extended to mean "cheat" or "to obtain by devious means."
- fold.** Come to an abrupt end, often with the implication of failure. An unsuccessful play is said to *fold* when it closes.
- highball.** Term for a whisky-and-soda. In the early days of railroading, a ball was hoisted above the station to tell an approaching train that the track was clear.
- hot.** An underworld term for "stolen." Also used generally to mean "exciting" and "excellent."
- kid along.** To jolly; to flatter; to make fun of by deceptive talk.
- love nest.** Euphemism for an extra-matrimonial establishment.
- needle.** Slang verb meaning "to goad" or "to tease."
- pay off.** In slang, a thing *pays off* if it is successful.
- plant.** Noun meaning something deliberately placed or arranged to involve an innocent person or to give a misleading impression.

renege. In card playing, *renege* means to fail to follow suit when able to do so; popularly it means "to go back on a promise."

smear. To defame or to libel.

stall. A story or excuse intended to delay action.

(4) Slang idioms include the following:

blind date. An appointment for a social evening with someone you have not yet met.

break the ice. To begin. To overcome the coldness of formality or reserve.

catch. Slang verb meaning "see; hear; be present at"; as in "I hope he can *catch* my act at the theater to-night." Also, as a noun, means "a condition, an undisclosed drawback."

chew the rag. Talk in a friendly manner.

doghouse, in the. In disfavor.

heat on, put the. Bring pressure to bear.

horsing around. Cavorting; indulging in practical jokes.

rap, take the. Be sentenced to prison; take the blame.

spill it. Tell your story.

stick around. Don't leave.

wagon, on the. Short for *on the water wagon*: abstaining from intoxicating liquors.

works, give him the. Bring pressure to bear upon him.

(5) Some slang terms may be traced to proper names:

dick. Detective.

hick. A rustic; probably from Dick or Richard.

jack. Money.

mac. Equivalent to *friend* or *buddy*.

McCoy. *The real McCoy* means "the genuine thing."

nance. A man with feminine ways.

rube. A rustic; probably a short form of Reuben.

sideburns. A distortion of *burnsides*; probably named for General Burnside, a Civil War officer who wore such side whiskers.

(6) American slang is famous for its colorful coinages:

balled up. Confused.

berries, the. Supreme.

bum ticker. A bad heart.

chiseler. A gouger; one who employs unfair tactics.

corny. Old-fashioned; out-of-date. Applied to sentimental music by advocates of modern jazz.

dive. A disreputable place. Also called *joint*.

gams. Legs.

geezer. Old man.

hep. Aware; discriminating.

hot dog. A frankfurter served in a roll.

middle-aisle. To marry. A Winchell coinage.

ninny. Short for *nincompoop*, a distortion of *non compos mentis*; means "a stupid person."

nuts. (1) An exclamation of disgust. (2) A noun meaning *insane*.

peevd. Annoyed; irritated.

phony. Imitation; fraudulent.

Reno-vated. Divorced. A Winchell invention.

screwball. Person with odd ideas or manners.

scrumptious. Simply superb.

spondulix. Money.

stir. Prison.

swanky. Elegant.

wacky. Eccentric.

wisecrack. A quip or gibing retort.

wise guy. A pretender to wisdom.

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